

READER

SEN MORIMOTO MAKES CROWDED SONGS ALL BY HIMSELF

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BY **LEOR GALIL 25**



TO CONTACT ANY READER
EMPLOYEE, E-MAIL:
(FIRST INITIAL)(LAST NAME)
@CHICAGOREADER.COM

PUBLISHER TRACY BAIM
ACTING DEPUTY EDITOR KATE SCHMIDT
CREATIVE DIRECTOR VINCE CERASANI
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
JAMIE RAMSAY
CULTURE EDITOR AIMEE LEVITT
MUSIC EDITOR PHILIP MONTORO
ASSOCIATE EDITOR JAMIE LUDWIG
SENIOR WRITERS DEANNA ISAACS,
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STAFF WRITERS MAYA
DUKMASOVA, LEOR GALIL
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR RYAN SMITH
GRAPHIC DESIGNER SUE KWONG
MUSIC LISTINGS COORDINATOR
LUCA CIMARUSTI
FILM LISTINGS COORDINATOR
PATRICK FRIEL
CONTRIBUTORS ED BLAIR, LUCA
CIMARUSTI, SHERRY FLANDERS, ISA
GIALLORENZO, ANDREA GRONVALL, JUSTIN
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DISTRIBUTION CONCERNS
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CONSULTANT CAROL BELL

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ON SALE TO VINOFILM MEMBERS TUESDAY 10.2

11.12 CONYA DOSS
12.17-18 TAB BENOIT
12.25 CHRISTMAS FOR THE JEWS FEAT. JOEL CHASNOFF, MOODY MCCARTHY AND RABBI BARRY SCHECHTER
1.3-4 MUSIQ SOULCHILD
1.14-15 & 2.25-26 STEVE EARLE
1.31-2.2 ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO WITH DON ANTONIO BAND
2.22-23 BOBBY MCFERRIN & GIMME5: CIRCLESONGS



**CRYSTAL
BOWERSOX**

10.8



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STONES**

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BROOKS & BILLY BRANCH

10.12



**LAS GUITARRAS DE ESPAÑA
PRESENT SURABHI
ENSEMBLE**
W/ MASSAMBA DIOP

10.15



**GRANT-LEE
PHILLIPS &
JOSH ROUSE**

10.17



**STEVEN
PAGE TRIO**
(FORMERLY OF BARENAKED
LADIES) WITH WESLEY
STAGE

10.18



ISAAC MIZRAHI
MODERATE TO SEVERE

10.19



TERISA GRIFFIN
2 UNIQUE SHOWS

10.20



JIM MESSINA

10.21



**WILDCLAW
THEATRE**
HORROR STORIES
& WINE PAIRING

10.22



**ALGEBRA
BLESSETT**

10.25



**KEVIN
GRIFFIN**
(OF BETTER THAN EZRA)

10.26



**AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH
MATISYAHU**

10.28-30



DAVID COOK

10.31



PAUL THORN
WITH TRAPPER SCHOEPP

11.1



LOOSE ENDS
FEAT. JANE EUGENE

11.3

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What is it with Illinois governors?
 JESSICA KOSCIELNIAK/
 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

POLITICS

Rauner vs. Kavanaugh

Who's the bigger fraud, the anti-union governor who claims to be a centrist, or the Supreme Court nominee who claims he will uphold the law dispassionately?

By BEN JORAVSKY

As recent events unfold, a pressing question emerges: Who's the bigger fraud, Judge Brett Kavanaugh or Governor Bruce Rauner?

Consider the case for Kavanaugh, Donald Trump's latest Supreme Court nominee. Kavanaugh wants America to believe he's the victim of a massive left-wing conspiracy hatched by the Clintons as payback for the November 2016 presidential election.

As opposed to what he really is—a Republican political hack who threw a hissy fit at last week's Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, where Christine Blasey Ford, a highly credible psychologist who has nothing to do with the Clintons, accused him of sexual assault.

Sample comment from Kavanaugh's own testimony at that judiciary hearing...

"I'm not questioning that Dr. Ford may have

been sexually assaulted..."

Even though by using the word *may*, Kavanaugh's passive-aggressively doing just that—questioning her claims.

Pretty fraudulent.

On the other hand, there's Governor Rauner, who on his political deathbed has obviously realized that he'd better scurry to the center because he's down in the polls against J.B. Pritzker, his Democratic opponent.

So Rauner recently gave a speech before the Illinois Chamber of Commerce positioning himself as a great centrist who's offended both the left and right.

Or, as Rauner put it: "Boy, I've got to tell you, holding up the center has been incredibly hard as governor."

He followed up with an interview with *Crain's* where he declared that he's not

"anti-union".

Wow. All right let's unpack this one.

I must concede that there's a small—very small—kernel of truth to Rauner's centrist comments. He does lean moderate on abortion. But when it comes to labor issues, he's in Koch brothers territory.

In particular, his antipathy toward unions—especially the teachers' union—borders on madness.

For his first three years as governor, Rauner was able to drag Republican legislators off the cliff with him on his anti-union policies.

But by last year, Republican legislators—led by state rep Jeanne Ives—basically told Rauner they'd stop falling in line if he were to sign HB 40, the abortion rights legislation.

So Rauner privately assured them he'd veto it.

“Rauner has the worst of all worlds. No one likes him. In fact, about the only thing on which his enemies agree is—you can’t trust Bruce Rauner.”

When word of his promise got out, there was an eruption of protest among suburban moderates—egged on by my old pal, Terry Cosgrove, executive director of Personal PAC, the abortion rights group.

Cosgrove released a copy of a statement from Rauner in 2014, in which the then candidate promised to sign a reproductive rights bill like HB 40.

Under pressure, Rauner flip-flopped again, and wound up signing HB 40 after all. That angered Ives so much she ran against Rauner in the Republican primary.

Rauner beat Ives. But now state senator Sam McCann is running a third-party campaign on the Conservative Party ticket, largely blasting Rauner as a sellout.

So Rauner has the worst of all worlds. No one likes him. In fact, about the only thing on which Cosgrove and Ives and McCann agree is—you can’t trust Bruce Rauner.

And that brings us to his current attempt to reposition himself as a centrist in a desperate attempt to recapture some suburban moder-

ates to offset the conservatives who’ll vote for McCann.

So to remind everyone about how anti-union Rauner has been, let me point out that he initiated the Janus case.

That’s the lawsuit filed by Mark Janus, a former state employee, that led to the Supreme Court ruling that public sector employees have a First Amendment right not to pay union fees, even if unions are obliged to represent those workers.

The deciding vote in *Janus* was cast by Justice Neil Gorsuch, appointed by President Trump to fill a vacancy that was created when Barack Obama was president.

But of course, the Republican leader, Senator Mitch McConnell, refused to give Obama’s nominee, Merrick Garland, a hearing. So Rauner’s great moment was largely a gift from McConnell and Trump.

So much for Rauner the centrist.

To make sure my ancient baby-boomer’s memory hadn’t forgotten Rauner’s other anti-union positions, I called Jake Lewis.

He’s the campaign director of Illinois Working Together, a union-backed think tank. He’s also a millennial, meaning his memory’s way sharper than my ancient baby-boomer one.

“Did you mention that Rauner supported legislation that would create right-to-work zones?” Lewis asked, referring to districts in which all employees, public and private, are free not to pay union fees, thus starving unions of the funds they need to operate.

Oh yeah, that.

“And did you mention that he voted a bill that would have given collective bargaining rights to emergency medical technicians? And that he vetoed the \$15 minimum wage? And that he’s tried to cut the prevailing wage for the trade unions? And that he donated \$500,000 to the Illinois Policy Institute, which is actively encouraging people to leave their unions? And that he vetoed a bill that would set a \$40,000 minimum annual wage for schoolteachers? And that he . . .”

Thanks, Jake—but I think you’ll have to finish your list in a future column, ‘cause I’m running out of space in this one.

Back to our central question—who’s the bigger fraud, Kavanaugh or Rauner? I call it a tie.

Let’s keep one off the Supreme Court and vote the other out of office. I say no more Republicans until that party comes to its senses. **✍**

@BennyJshow



SPORTS

Good luck charm

Elvis and singing-and-dancing superheroes will be among the biggest cheerleaders at the Chicago Marathon.

By **MARYKATE O'MEARA**

As runners in the 41st annual Chicago Marathon bustle their way toward the finish line, the mellifluous melodies of the King of Rock 'n' Roll will break the silence between breaths.

The man in the jumpsuit is actually Chicagoan Joe Tirrito, who will post up on a small temporary stage at the corner of North and Wells. For his eighth Chicago Marathon in a row, Tirrito will be doing what he does best: impersonating Elvis Presley.

Tirrito has been performing as Elvis across the globe for 32 years. His lifelong admiration for the King was sparked at a young age when he would spend hours in his father's truck with Elvis on the radio. Eventually that admiration developed into tribute performances.

In his bedazzled jumpsuit, slicked-back hairdo, and dashing pair of sideburns, Tirrito channels Elvis's signature moves and vocals for the duration of the marathon. Both runners and spectators sing along to the Elvis hits and American classics, but it's the patriotic tunes that really inspire runners. “‘American Trilogy’ and ‘Glory Glory Hallelujah’ motivate the runners because they’re very patriotic songs,” Tirrito explains. “When the runners hear these songs they’re reminded that they can do it, they can run this marathon.”

A few miles north of the King at mile 8.8, Chicago's LGBTQA running-and-walking organization, the Frontrunners/Frontwalkers, celebrate athleticism and queerness. For the past 28 marathons, the Frontrunners/Frontwalkers have put on a themed song-and-dance performance at their water station. At the 2017 marathon, four “Dancing Queen” Frontrunners/Frontwalkers dressed as ABBA, moved and grooved to the hits of 1970's pop stars with pride flags in hand. This year the Frontrunners will celebrate a “MARVELOUS Marathon” at the four corners of the intersection of Melrose and Broadway with two stages, a DJ, and six to ten performers in superhero suits.

The Frontrunners/Frontwalkers believe it's crucial to embrace your identity while simultaneously embracing a healthy lifestyle. The group's president, John Bowen, explains that the LGBTQA community is sometimes misrepresented as prioritizing nightlife, partying, and sex. He goes on to explain, “It's very important for our community to be associated with fitness and athletics that are practiced in a welcoming atmosphere.” Each year, as their organization expands, so does their performance: “As the marathon has grown, we keep raising the bar.” **✍**



Yes, Jeremy Scahill is at war with America

The “adversarial” journalist and cofounder of the Intercept talks Trump, police violence, racism in America, and more.

By RYAN SMITH

There was no obvious moment when the torch was passed during host Jeremy Scahill’s interview with Seymour Hersh on a recent live episode of *Intercepted*. But it wasn’t difficult to imagine one.

Like Hersh, Scahill was born on the south side of Chicago, and his worldview was partially shaped by his family’s experience in the city that he calls “this amazing place filled with contradictions.”

The 43-year-old investigative journalist and cofounding editor of online news site the Intercept is also following in the formidable footsteps of his Pulitzer Prize-winning forebear in his choice of career. Both men have made their marks unmasking corruption and abuses of power at the highest level of the U.S. government—especially in the domains of war and foreign policy. For Hersh, it was exposing the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam war, the torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the CIA’s secret surveillance programs. Scahill’s reporting helped uncover ugly truths behind Blackwater, the private mercenary army employed by the Bush administration during the Iraq War, and shone a light on the U.S. military’s bloody covert operations and drone assassinations during the Obama years.

But where Hersh found a home at bastions of the establishment like the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times* and the Associated Press, Scahill has remained an outsider in more ways than one.

Raised by activist Catholic parents, Scahill took to political activism himself at a young age, notably working as a student organizer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison before dropping out in 1995. He hitchhiked east and spent a year working with the radical anti-war ex-priest Philip Berrigan at a religious community in Baltimore. A year later, he was one of 11 people arrested in Chicago (along with Chicago Seven figure David Dellinger and Andrew Hoffman, the son of Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman) for protesting the imprisonment of Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement.

Scahill made the move from activist to journalist without abandoning his progressive politics. He started as a volunteer with Amy Goodman’s show *Democracy Now!* in 1997, and in the two decades since has put in stints with muckraker Michael Moore, the *Nation* magazine, and now with the Intercept, which describes its work as “fear-

less, adversarial journalism.” That career of working for left-leaning outlets is what has led critics to dismiss Scahill as an advocate or ideologue who, as *City Journal* [the magazine of the conservative Manhattan Institute] once put it, has been waging “one long war on America and capitalism.” It’s an accusation Scahill scoffs at, saying rather that “I’m at war with all of the ideals that American exceptionalists promote.”

On October 9 Scahill returns to Chicago for a live taping of an episode of *Intercepted*, the Intercept’s weekly news and political analysis podcast, part of the Third Coast International Audio Festival. The *Reader* spoke with him about Trump, police violence, mainstream media, and much more.

So you were born in Chicago but grew up in the Milwaukee area?

My mom is from Aurora, and my dad is from Hyde Park. His parents were Irish immi-

grants that came here on the boat and ended up settling, like a lot of Irish did, in Chicago. He grew up in the neighborhood and went to Saint Thomas the Apostle Church. When the civil rights movement started and then came north to Chicago, my dad got politicized. He was at the famous march in Cicero where Martin Luther King said we didn’t bring the violence, we just exposed the violence that’s always been there. I think that was a turning point in my dad’s life, and he became part of what became known as the Catholic left.

At the time I think he was planning on going to the seminary to be a priest. But long story short—my dad met my mom, and that definitely threw him off the tracks of the priesthood. They eventually settled in Milwaukee.

You and Sy Hersh are from different generations but I see a lot of similarities—he also grew up on the south side, and his journalism was shaped by some of the political developments that were going on.

Yeah, isn’t Chicago this amazing place filled with contradictions? You have this incredible history of worker rebellion, of poor people’s rebellions. You have the stories of the stockyards and labor struggle and the plight of workers and the fight for an eight-hour workday. And then you have the political machine that famously unleashed the Chicago police force against protesters during the 1968 convention. I mean, Chicago had this prominent African-American mayor at a time when racism was very acute.

In Chicago, you have really both big parts of the United States. You have the power elite on the one hand that supports the existing power structure and toys with elections and keeping the same politicians in power. And then you have a story of fierce resistance. In preparation to come back to Chicago, I’ve been reading some of the original reporting of Ida B. Wells, which unfortunately has become so relevant again in the era of Trump, where you have very overt fascist, neo-Nazi, white supremacist ideas. Those have never gone away in America, but [now] they’ve been empowered in a public way from the most powerful podium in the country, and everywhere you look for historical context, you find flashes of Chicago in that story.

Do you think that one side breeds the other? Does the authoritarianism fuel the radical tradition?

The thing you have to remember is Chicago was a laboratory and a model for how African-Americans were going to be treated in the “new civil rights era,” with people stacked up high in the sky in public housing and this

entrenched legalized form of servitude or imposed poverty.

The way African-Americans were treated in the postindustrial foundation of Chicago has everything to do with why this fierce resistance movement rose up under fertile ground. Also, Chicago has a history of racism. Martin Luther King chose to go to Chicago as a political statement. He wasn't just taking on right-wing racists, he was taking on a power structure in a city that was largely run by white northern Democrats.

I think it's oversimplifying it to say that there are two paths. The short answer to your question is, yes, one side has fed the other. But both of those are ingrained in the DNA of the city.

Do you think that we're in a turning point in Chicago history right now? Between the Laquan MacDonald trial, and Rahm Emanuel announcing that he isn't running for a third term...

Look, the Chicago police force is one of the most notorious, racist organized crime gangs in modern U.S. history. When you talk about policing in Chicago, you are talking about a war, a war against the poor, a war against African-Americans.

This has become one of the main talking points for the president of the United States. He talks about Chicago in a way that's not a [racist] dog whistle—it's a foghorn to say "The black people with the guns? They're the problem." You can't talk about why there is gun violence in Chicago without talking about the history of economic violence in the city. You can't talk about the killing of unarmed young black men without talking about the way that black people were warehoused and stripped of any economic independence.

It's like vacuuming away all historical context and saying, "Let's just look at these things that happened yesterday." History doesn't work that way. Facts don't work that way. This is very much a semi-apartheid state for many of Chicago's residents.

And I should note that Jon Burge—one of the most notorious thugs to ever wear the badge of the Chicago Police Department—just died, but his spirit lives on with cases like Laquan McDonald. [Burge] was a guy who was engaged in systematic torture of black men. He had cut his teeth, so to speak, doing special operations in Vietnam. He came back to Chicago and unleashed those same tactics that were deployed against Vietnamese people on African-Americans in Chicago. That history should never be forgotten when we listen to politicians talking about the "unfair" bad reputation the Chicago Police Department has gotten. No.

Meanwhile, there's been plenty of resistance in Chicago from organizations such as Black Lives Matter, Black Youth Project 100, the Democratic Socialists of America.

I noticed that Eve Ewing [Chicago writer, poet, and sociologist whose book *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* comes out October 5] is a guest on your upcoming show.

One of the reasons why I'm so excited about having Eve is she's been so deeply rooted in the experience of the Chicago public school system and the apartheid state of public education, but also the fierce resistance of the teachers' union. CTU stands out nationally as a fighting force for fairness and for the most disenfranchised children in those schools. She can connect the dots to the modern context for what young African-Americans face in this country, but also she's brilliant. She's one of the most dynamic young minds that we have in this country, and I think that she should be heard on a much wider platform.

After Rahm announced that he's not running again, I wrote that it might be a sign that the age of the neoliberal Democrat is waning in Chicago. Am I overstating it?

Rahm Emanuel represented a modernization of the old-fashioned machine politics in Chicago. Let's remember, he went to Washington when Obama was elected and was Obama's chief of staff. One of the things Emanuel became absolutely famous for within the administration early on was kneecapping or threatening to kneecap Democrats who didn't toe the line on right-wing or militarist legislative efforts emanating from the Obama White House. He was known as one of the most fierce haters of progressives in Congress.

Right now in this country, the institutional party that Rahm Emanuel is part of is in a crisis and the left is at a crossroads with the victories of Democratic Socialist candidates. It may be an outcome of the Trump moment where socialism is no longer seen as a subject of the Soviet Union but actually a serious set of ideas or concepts that you can draw inspiration from to address the racial, political, and economic inequities of this country. It may not happen in this election cycle—that's a huge, huge battle—but Chicago I think would be ripe for shaking the foundations of this kind of municipal power brokers in this country. If Chicago somehow elected a leftist as mayor, I think it would send shockwaves through the institutional Democratic Party.

But people to the left of the Democratic Party are going to have to decide: "Are we going to take on the Democratic Party machinery, or are we going to take some

"Look, the Chicago police force is one of the most notorious, racist organized crime gangs in modern U.S. history. When you talk about policing in Chicago, you are talking about a war, a war against the poor, a war against African-Americans."

crumbs off the table in return for a seat at that table?" And the verdict is still out on that. If you want to boil it down to a microlevel in Chicago, I think a lot of it depends on how many young people, African-Americans, immigrants, and working people realize that the Democratic Party—throughout its history—exploits the very people it claims to represent.

Meanwhile, Rahm just landed a book deal, and he's writing about why mayors are the big power brokers in American politics now.

Rahm is right—mayors are very powerful. District attorneys are very powerful. I think a lot of times in politics we think about the House and the Senate. Obviously, that's very important to everyone's lives, but Rahm Emanuel is right—mayors are basically kings.

I dug up a hit piece about you that describes your career as one long war on America and capitalism. Is that accurate at all?

First of all, what is America? Am I at war against the America that claims it's the exception in the world? Am I at war with the America that has billionaires with 20 houses and homeless people? Am I at war against the America that believes it has the right to invade and bomb other countries? I'm at war with all of the ideals that American exceptionalists promote, not the entire country.

We've just been talking about a history full of so many contradictions, so many heroes and villains. I align myself with those people who recognize the potential that exists in this country to build something that is unique in the world. There are so many aspects of the aspirations of this society, the claims of what America is, that are worth fighting for. I'm a journalist, and the First Amendment is important. But if we're talking about the actual facts of what the United States has stood for under Democrats and Republicans under Obama and Trump—yeah, I'm at war against that.

As for capitalism, I believe that the rich should pay their share. They thrive on the underpaid and, at times, unpaid labor of the working class. I believe that there should be laws prohibiting homelessness. There should be free health care. There should be free education. We should not have a record number of people incarcerated. We should not be locking up nonviolent drug offenders while corporate criminals sell pharmaceuticals for an enormous profit and walk around scot-free and get professional awards.

These people want to force you to accept the ahistorical and inaccurate portrayal of what America means and then say that anyone who opposes it and refuses to bow to capitalism or the free market are all traitors.

It's a cliché, but I think it's true that dissent is a proven form of patriotism in this country. I firmly believe that if Martin Luther King were around today he wouldn't even be allowed to speak at his own celebrations. He was a radical. He was a democratic socialist. He believed in the free distribution of wealth. He was against the American imperial war machine. He claimed that the United States was the greatest purveyor of violence on earth.

History is manipulated, sanitized and regurgitated by the powerful, and it's part of the sickness that we have in this society. Am I at war with America? Am I at war with capitalism? Why aren't you at war with the justice factory run by a bipartisan elite clique in this country? Why are you pleased with that? Well, maybe you're benefiting from it.

There's also this very limited conception of what it means to be a journalist. Plenty of people think we're supposed to play ➔

continued from 9
the role of neutral arbiter between our two establishment parties. When people talk about “covering both sides” of a debate, they mean what Republicans and Democrats say.

Noam Chomsky was once on CNN in 2002 for a couple of minutes, and lot of that interview is him getting yelled at by Bill Bennett, the right-winger. Chomsky is perhaps the most famous living American dissident, and he’s never invited on these shows. Who is invited instead? People like David Frum—the “hero” of the so-called political resistance on MSNBC. He’s the guy who wrote Bush’s justification of that fraudulent and murderous war in Iraq. All of the former heads of the NSA, the CIA—they’re all lionized now on the network. They’re never asked about crimes they have committed. They’re just now a part of the main discussion group that’s run by the major networks along with the two major parties.

To me, one of the great disappointments of the 2016 election is that Bernie Sanders didn’t say, “Fuck it! I’m running as an independent.” He would’ve been blamed for Trump winning if Trump did win, but he’s already blamed for Trump winning.

But that’s the bad thing about this country since the Democratic-Republicans solidi-

fied their duopoly—it’s a sadder two-party system. You never would’ve believed Bernie was going to play the game, but, my god, if he had run as a third-party candidate . . .

Steve Bannon talks about this, and I actually agree with him. The Democratic Party is eventually going to have its own version of a political civil war, and it’s going to be the left lane and the outside-the-left lane. It’ll be painful for a while, but we need to stop voting with fear and start actually voting with what we believe in and fighting for what we believe in.

Often on Intercepted, you describe Trump as this extraordinary crook who is ultimately not a big exception. He has just accidentally exposed the true face of our ruling class and the forces of late capitalism. We’re seeing this now with the Kavanaugh hearing—this is who our ruling class is. They’re power-hungry assholes.

Here’s basically all you need to know about the state of America under Donald Trump. Some months ago you had a huge vote in Congress on authorizing sweeping surveillance powers for the Trump administration. And then more recently you had this record-breaking defense bill named after John McCain, \$718 billion. Eighty-five percent of Democrats in the Senate voted for that massive military budget. The most powerful elite Democrats voted for sweeping surveillance powers for Trump.

If he is this grand danger and threat to this country that the Democrats are telling us that he is—and I think in some ways he is—why are they authorizing sweeping surveillance powers for a guy they believe is compromised by a foreign power run by a former KGB agent?

It’s bullshit. Trump is this garish crook who beat the most powerful political dynasty in modern American history in the Clintons and beat 16 other Republicans. Did he cheat? Probably, but he beat them! There. He’s in power and they’re voting to give him more power. Just look at their voting records. It’s true.

Well, and the John McCain funeral was almost like a prom for all of them.

I like that, man. Yeah, it was! It was like an elite Democratic-Republican prom. I think you should run with that.

What I mean is that that funeral was kind of a celebration of someone like McCain, who voted mostly with Trump but was a better statesman who cultivated this reputation of respectful bipartisanship.

Look, if Donald Trump had actually dropped napalm in Vietnam, maybe they’d like him more. America loves a war criminal. It’s like

“Am I at war with America? Am I at war with capitalism? Why aren’t you at war with the injustice factory run by a bipartisan elite clique in this country? Why are you pleased with that? Well, maybe you’re benefiting from it.”

Trump doesn’t have the right resumé to run the American empire. He has the white supremacy, but he’s missing the core component of actually mass murdering that makes someone an American hero.

The media—and all of us—do seem to have an atrophied memory about history. Sometimes it seems like the Internet and social media have a way of erasing the past and future. That seems especially true in the age of Trump.

I mean, look at the attempted rehabilitation of George W. Bush. Because he didn’t support Donald Trump, he’s now a resistance hero. It’s like, “Oh, he’s a nice painter guy. Look at how he hugs Michelle Obama or gives her a piece of candy at John McCain’s funeral. Oh, I love him so much. Such a sweet guy. Maybe he wasn’t that bad.”

This guy was a fucking mass murderer. A million Iraqis are dead. A million more dis-

placed from home. And that’s just talking about Iraq. That’s not even talking about CIA black sites or opening up Guantanamo and allowing Dick Cheney to essentially rewrite the Constitution with legal interpretations of what torture is.

Someone said to me on the day of his inauguration, “Trump is a fucking circus worker.” But he’s doing much of what the [political elite] want him to do; he’s just not doing [it] in a way that they like because it’s so foolish. I mean, Trump just spoke at the UN General Assembly and literally got laughed at out loud. But his speech in substance was about the American imperialist position in the world, and largely what a Democrat or Republican before him would have said, with a few stylistic changes. There’s a lot to unpack about what happened during Bill Clinton’s presidency—which was overwhelmingly a right-wing presidency and a vicious, hawkish moment in American history.

If you want to just engage in the idea that America’s problems began the moment Trump won or seized power, that’s not a serious discussion. We’re not allowed to have a serious discussion about World War II in this country. America beats the bad guys at the end of World War II. That’s the end of the story. We had to drop the atomic bombs to get Japan to surrender. You want to get into an incendiary conversation on TV in this country, bring up the fact that the U.S. committed war crimes in World War II. It’s like you’re burning the American flag on an MSNBC set.

This is probably the kind of thing that gets you accused of being anti-American.

I haven’t been allowed on CNN since I said live on their airwaves that Fareed Zakaria would have sex with a cruise missile strike if he could.

In the world of the #Resistance [against Trump], the Intercept is sometimes treated as a branch of Russia Today.

That’s just silly season. The Intercept every day has hard-hitting, in-depth investigative journalism. These people are afraid of the fact that we go after even liberal darlings, and all news organizations, regardless of their political agenda.

It’s sort of like being the skunk at the party. When you’re dropping grenades in the backyards of all these powerful people who are all really friends in real life, they don’t like that. They’re part of the Washington elite that includes journalists and political figures.

I really don’t give a flying fuck about what people think about the Intercept. 

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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Mini Mott feeds a burger cult

A Mott St. satellite in Logan Square is dedicated to a once rare and elusive cheeseburger.

By MIKE SULA

Never in my life did I imagine that I'd one day make arguments against hamburgers, but I have all but pleaded with chefs to stop putting them on their menus. I recognize that the notoriously thin profit margins of the typical Chicago restaurant often require the fattening properties of what's becoming the chicken breast of the average modern American menu—the thing that timid, incurious eaters can be depended on to order.

This has also led to an ongoing arms race to develop ever more weaponized upgrades on the simple idea of a griddled ground beef patty sandwiched between two halves of a soft bun.

I'm sure it goes back further, but I blame Kuma's Korner, the Avondale metal bar that in the early aughts achieved insane levels of popularity with its thick, beef-based Towers of Babel, stacked with precipitous layers of meats, cheeses, sauces, and garnish such as to require a fork for the inevitable wreckage. Soon these wobbling ziggurats began popping up all over town, heaped with everything from doughnuts to peanut butter to mac 'n' cheese.

The direction shifted after people started spending unreasonable portions of their evenings waiting for one of Hogsalt Hospitality's Au Cheval burgers, a pair (or trio) of food-service-grade, diner-style patties topped with cheese and optional eggs and bacon. The result was a minimalist counterreaction to the excesses of the day that reintroduced the



Belgian chocolate taiyaki; Belgian chocolate shake and the Mott burger CASEY VANDERSTEL

burger fundamentals in all their power.

These days the diner burger is in ascendance, but the impulse to use it as a vehicle for incompatible top loads maintains.

Mini Mott is a new platform for the diner-style burger that achieved some cult status at Edward Kim's sorta-Asian street-food spot Mott St, where due to kitchen limitations it was available only at the restaurant's bar before 7 PM.

Now, to satisfy demand, Kim and company have taken over prime Logan Square real estate and dedicated it to this: two thin patties blanketed by American cheese embedded with chopped raw onion, smeared with hoisin aioli and miso compound butter, and topped with

cucumbers, pickled jalapeños, and a pigeon's nest of frizzle-fried sweet potato. It arrives with an Instagram-ready tip o' the toasted bun, ready to shake its ass for the iPhone.

The upper levels of this sandwich do indeed make a statement, forming a crunchy, crispy, gooey, tangy, sweet, and squishy umami storm that just happened to blow in on some beef. (Periodic burger specials demonstrate the versatility of this approach: a recent offering, the Chicago Bears Burger, oozed giardiniera, truffled Gruyere sauce, and fried red onions.)

The well-done, nearly uniform patties are under there somewhere, but they have so little flavor or textural interest—no fetching browning or lacy edges—that they do little

more than serve as the floor of a basement frat party in its final hour. Then again, if you object to any amount of carnal pleasure whatsoever, you can go for the "carnitas," made from shredded unripe jackfruit. At that young stage the inherently bland tropical species sometimes convinces vegans they can live another day without eating their own.

Supporting roles at Mini Mott are played by shoestring fries dressed with garlic confit and by wings—small, sugary, soy-saturated chicken wings crusted with everything-bagel seasoning. (The latter were developed at the mother ship, Mott St; the former first introduced at Kim's late Ruxbin.) "Hangry Wings," another version of these petite pinions, is ➔



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Left: the Reina Pepiada; right: arepa with pulled pork, Gouda, and plantain
© MIKE SULA

ONE BITE

Meet the Venezuelan superhero of the sandwich universe

Arepas are stuffed your way at Lincoln Square's Sweet Pepper.

By MIKE SULA

Suddenly the 2600 block of West Lawrence, on the west end of Lincoln Square, seems like an international sandwich incubator. Joining longtime banh mi supremacists Nhu Lan Bakery and the cheesesteak church of Monti's around the corner on Rockwell, the new kid on the block is Sweet Pepper Venezuelan Food Bar, a storefront trafficking in the *arepa rellena*, the stuffed cornmeal wonder of Venezuela.

There are those among you who will argue that this is no sandwich, but a food category unto itself. And that's at least mechanically supported in that the puffed, toasty griddled corn puck isn't completely bisected, only opened like a pocket and filled with various meats, cheeses, sauces, legumes, and vegetables. (OK, point taken, but what do you call the thing that's falafel stuffed into pita bread?)

Just work with me. Sweet Pepper is the inspiration of Jose Navea and Andrea Andrade, a young couple formerly of the Andean city of Mérida, in northwestern Venezuela, and it's the latest in an almost unprecedented string of Venezuelan restaurants like Bienmesabe, La Cocinita, Rica Arepa, and 11 Degrees North (RIP Arip'o's), all founded by recent arrivals who've escaped the chaos of their native country. We're lucky to have them.

It's due to these newcomers that we've become increasingly familiar with classic combos like La Nuestra ("Ours"), stuffed with *pabelon*, the Venezuelan national dish of shredded beef, black beans, sweet plantains, and cheese; the El Domino, named for its contrasting black beans

and crumbled white cheese; and the chicken-salad-and-avocado Reina Pepiada ("Voluptuous Queen"), named in honor of Susana Duijm, winner of the 1955 Miss World pageant.

If you're not hip to the classics, Sweet Pepper takes the mystery out of the arepa-stuffing process with a Chipotle-style build-your-own combo system wherein you choose a protein (barbacoa, pulled pork, shredded chicken, avocado-chicken, tuna, tofu), then add cheese, beans, and/or vegetables and a variety of sauces, like the thin guac variant guasacaca, or the sweet and spicy aji pepper relish that the restaurant is named for, a specialty of Mérida.

The arepas' crisp outer layer bulges around the ample fillings Andrade and Navea pack into their soft, faintly sweet interiors. They're durable little bassinets, but inevitably there's some fallout, so if you prefer to work with a fork and bowl from the start, you can apply the formula over rice, salad, or plantains. Still, that's to deny yourself a singular hand-to-mouth experience.

They're frying their own yuca and plantain chips at Sweet Pepper, and bottling a few juices like mango, passion fruit, and *pabelon*, a lemonade gently sweetened with cane and brown sugar that almost tastes like an unfermented tepache. There are a few desserts too, but the folks behind Sweet Pepper are specialists, focusing on a superhero of the sandwich universe, here in the company of its kind. **M**

Twitter @MikeSula

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closer to the Buffalo standard, slathered in a mild sambal compound butter.

A few sides abide. There's a wedge salad, shishito peppers, and, most notably, skewered *ddeokbokki*—chile-glazed crispy-chewy Korean rice cakes, impaled on either side of some tasty Japanese-style Berkshire pork mini weenies. The last made me think a better use of this space might've been to showcase some interpretation of a *pojangmacha*, a hard-core, soju-soaked Korean street food oasis, slinging blood sausage, spicy chicken feet, and deep-fried corn dogs under tented bare lightbulbs.

There is a further commitment to street food, though. Mini Mott's daytime menu offers breakfast tacos, flour tortillas swaddling those sausages flayed into Octodogs and bedded with tight-curded scrambled eggs, Monterey Jack, and more everything-bagel seasoning, or a disturbing french-fry-and-egg taco dusted with ramen powder and the Japanese seasoning *furikake*, made with dried fish, sesame, and seaweed. Don't

worry, plant eaters. You can get your "carnitas" in a taco too.

Soft-serve ice cream brings up the rear, a changing seasonal choice (currently vanilla with mint) and a watery Belgian chocolate, available in a cup or shake, a cake cone, or coiled in the gaping mouth of a golden, fish-shaped Japanese street cake called *taiyaki*, its tail hiding a secret deposit of sweet adzuki bean paste.

There's a surprisingly varied beverage selection for such a focused concept, featuring seven cocktails and ten beers on draft—and those soft-serve milkshakes can be spiked—which makes Mini Mott's sidewalk cafe, chairs turned toward the boulevard Parisian style, a nice spot to drink, at least for the fair-weather days that remain. Still. While typically I'm a fan of specialists who commit to doing one exceptional thing, the Mott signature is just one of the countless unnecessary burgers that are defined more by what's on them than what's in them. **M**

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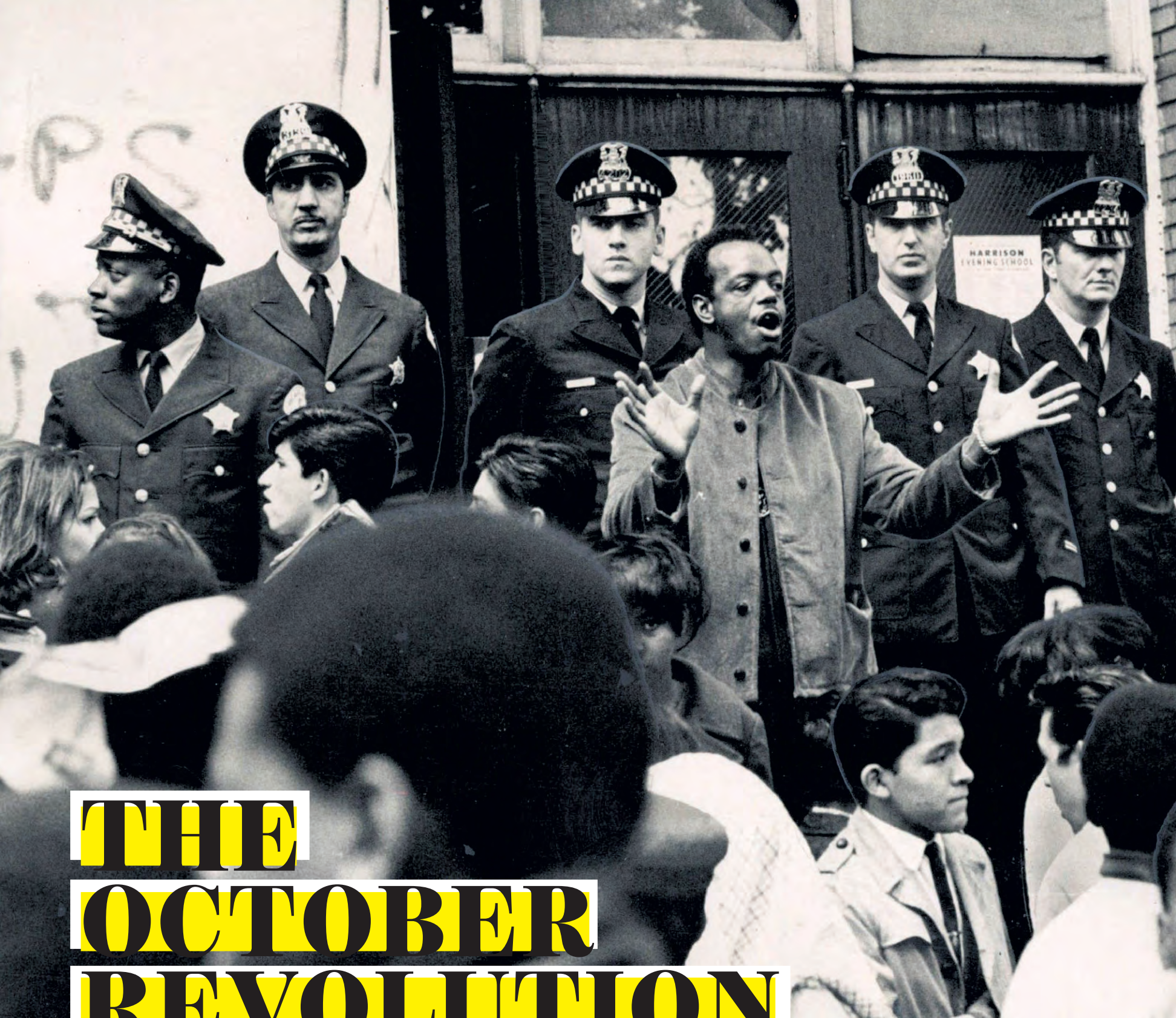
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THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

Fifty years ago, 35,000 Chicago students walked out of their classrooms in protest. They changed CPS forever.

By **TANNER HOWARD**



A city youth welfare street worker pleads with students to go home after a walkout at Harrison High School on October 9, 1968. Police line the school entrance. © LARRY GRAFF

It's 1968 and 18-year-old Pemon Rami, a recent graduate of Wendell Phillips Academy High School, stands in front of the Umoja Black Student Center in Bronzeville. He stares off into the distance, quiet, determined. Behind him, a poster with an illustration of Malcolm X preaches unstinting devotion to radical change, challenging viewers: "He was ready! Are you?"

It's 2018, and 68-year-old Rami stands before a photo of his younger self. Plenty has changed in those intervening years. A half century has softened his features and grayed his short-cut hair, but his presence remains self-assured. Though his own revolutionary moment has long since passed, he still believes that revolution belongs in the hands of the young. It's why, after a long career as a playwright and producer and as the director of educational services and public programs at the DuSable Museum of African American History, he now consults with groups such as Peace Warriors of North Lawndale College Prep High School and Fearless Leading by the Youth, hoping to pass along hard-earned lessons to those young people fighting today.

"You get to that point where you're no longer capable of having the kind of battles that you had when you're younger," he explains. "I think it's important that young people understand that it is their responsibility to be involved. It's not something you can bargain with."

But the bonds of solidarity that inspired Rami and his friends to launch a series of student walkouts to protest Chicago Public School's racist policies—a protest movement that eventually included 35,000 students—live on in every student strike today.

The past five years have seen a wellspring of student activism in Chicago and beyond, actions that hearken back to the unrest that transformed society 50 years ago. In Chicago, it was Mayor Rahm Emanuel's proposed closing of more than 200 schools in 2012—intended to save \$43 million annually—that first sparked resistance among teachers, parents, and students, an energy that carried forward into the Chicago Teachers Union's successful 2013 strike. In the end, 50 schools, not 200, were closed. (A 2018 study at the University of Chicago found that the closures had had no educational benefits, and CPS has not commented about whether the move did, indeed, save the district money.) In the last year, Englewood students have protested the proposed closure of four neighborhood high schools.

Everything changes, and everything stays the same. As Rami and others look back on their youthful accomplishments, organized actions that resulted in massive concessions from a school system that systematically denied Chicago's black and Latino youth the resources they needed, they're all too happy

to help today's youth see the connections that remain between past and present. They've been aided in their efforts by CPS educators. Together, they offer a potent reminder of what young people can accomplish.

The 1968 high school walkouts were an expression of growing dissent among the city's black and Latino student population, and a reflection of a wider climate of protest that permeated society at large. Years of disinvestment by Chicago Public Schools in the education of nonwhite students had created significant barriers for these students: there were few bilingual teachers, and the curriculum didn't represent their experiences. In 1968 they went on strike, pushing beyond the adult-led actions of previous years and defining their own terms of action.

Mass protest within the Chicago system wasn't new to 1968. Just five years earlier, the city was roiled by ongoing actions against the school board, which, as Chicago's black population spread to the west side, continually redrew school boundary lines in order to prevent integrated schools. While many white students attended classes in underenrolled schools, black and Latino students were crowded into converted mobile trailers, dubbed "Willis Wagons" after CPS's segregationist superintendent, Benjamin Willis.

The 1963 protests culminated on October 22, which protesters called Freedom Day. That Tuesday, more than 200,000 students left their schools and joined marches from all over the city toward downtown Chicago. While the mass gathering demonstrated the overwhelming frustration felt by the city's growing black population, it failed to dent Mayor Richard J. Daley's support for continued school segregation. The use of Willis Wagons would persist, and while it initially appeared that Willis himself might be forced into retirement, he would ultimately remain in office until 1966.

Though the protests were unable to unsettle the entrenched racial segregation that permeated Chicago, they instilled a spirit of resistance that persisted throughout the decade. Thanks in part to the Freedom Day actions, Martin Luther King Jr. chose to make Chicago the first city where the civil rights movement would challenge de facto segregation in the north. In 1966, Rami, then 16 and a student at Wendell Phillips, saw King speak at Stateway Gardens, one of the public housing projects that lined South State Street in Bronzeville.

"I was mesmerized," Rami remembers. "And then he said at the end of the speech, 'We're gonna march to Cicero and Gage Park and Marquette Park,' and I went home. We knew what he didn't—that our lives would be excessively in danger had we done that."

Rami wasn't the only student caught up in

the activist spirit of the time. Student dissent sharpened the following November when history teacher Owen Lawson was ordered to leave Englewood High School and report to the Board of Education after he began teaching black history and leading the Afro-American History Club. In response, several hundred high schoolers staged a walkout demanding his reinstatement as well as the introduction of formal black history courses. It was the first student-led action within the schools, and demonstrated a larger interest in Black Power politics less concerned with integration than black self-determination.

In the summer of 1968, Rami traveled to Philadelphia to participate in the Third National Conference on Black Power. At the conference, he and Masequa Myers, who led the protests at Calumet High School in Auburn Gresham, copresented a discussion about youth organizing at a gathering of high school students. (The two would be married seven years later.) They recognized the need to unite the different school organizing efforts happening across the city, a decision that would pay off several months later.

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The first student walkouts of 1968 launched on Monday, September 16, sparked by the principal's refusal to meet with students and discuss their desire for a better curriculum and a more representative teacher population at South Lawndale's Harrison High School. More than 500 students walked out that day, and after protesters felt the school's response was inadequate, approximately 1,000 walked out the next. Sharron Matthews was the vice president of New Breed, a black student group, and on September 18, she and New Breed president Victor Adams were suspended for their involvement. Adams, who was 18 at the time, was also arrested.

"They thought for a long time that we had adults telling us what to do, but we didn't," Matthews says. "This is what we came up with in our group, because we saw an injustice and wanted to fix it."

The school was relatively quiet while both students were under suspension. But upon their return on October 3, Matthews and Adams presented a manifesto to the principal drafted by New Breed, demanding a meeting with school administrators the following day. When the principal refused the meeting, ➔

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more than 250 students led an occupation of the school's lunchroom on October 7, eventually marching to the Chicago Board of Education after police broke up the demonstration. (That same day, students at Austin High School, apparently without knowledge of what was happening at Harrison, launched their own protests, demanding that a school with 48 percent black students be staffed with more than one black teacher.) While each of the schools involved in the demonstrations of the next several weeks had its own specific issues, the New Breed manifesto is representative of the fiercely independent outlook espoused by black students across the city.

"We demand freedom and justice now," the manifesto declared. "We . . . feel that the curriculum fails to meet the needs of the Black students." The manifesto demanded the hiring of black teachers and administrators, the introduction of formal black history courses, insurance for student athletes, and the recognition of ethnic student groups in schools. Latino students at Harrison, organizing in concert with black student groups, had their own list of demands, including bilingual educators and counselors, a Spanish-speaking assistant principal, and two years of mandatory Latin American history education.

These actions at Harrison caught the attention of students on the south side, including Rami and Myers. The decision to unite the various student activists in schools across the city would prove valuable, as "Black Monday" protests throughout October forced the Chicago Board of Education to collectively negotiate with student leaders. On Sunday, October 13, students from 13 high schools and several nearby colleges met to coordinate their activities and distill a list of 12 demands common to the different schools' manifestos. The next day, the first coordinated walkout saw 35,000 students leave their classrooms.

Walkouts continued throughout October. On the 28th, students marched to Civic Center Plaza, where Adams, Rami, and several other students theatrically smashed a wooden coffin labeled "Board of Education." Bowing to the ongoing pressure, the school board voted six to five to meet with student leaders on October 30, conferring official recognition on the students as representatives of their schools. The school board also agreed to immediately hire black principals at seven schools.

In spite of their young age, many of the students involved in these protests faced violence and intimidation. Matthews's younger sister, after being identified as her highly visible older sibling's relation, was thrown down the stairs by a police officer at Harrison High School (she suffered no serious injuries, only minor bruising). On November 4, efforts

"The students were being regarded as less than human, and their history and their beliefs and interests weren't considered actually valid or worth examination, and the students had had enough. Thankfully for us, they stood up and said, 'We're not gonna take it anymore.'"

—Nicole Marroquin, SAIC education professor

to stage further sit-ins within several school cafeterias resulted in 26 arrests. Thanks to those arrests, the growing pressure of outside groups on the student-led movement, and the students' success at bringing the school board to the table, the Black Monday protests finally came to an end.

Through a FOIA request, Rami later discovered there had been extensive police monitoring, including by the CPD's notorious

"Red Squad" that infiltrated the high-school student movement. Ironically, it's in part that police activity that has allowed Rami to remember many details of these actions, thanks to rigorous notetaking by an infiltrator during the student actions.

"If it wasn't for the FBI, I wouldn't have all the materials," Rami says.

In spite of the repression students faced, their actions led to the implementation of many crucial student demands. CPS hired greater numbers of black and Latino teachers, counselors, and administrators, and allowed the creation of ethnic studies classes and clubs. Harrison High School received funding for a soccer team that would win the state championship in 1973. And in 1977, after further protests that stretched into the early 70s, Benito Juarez Community Academy opened in Pilsen, fulfilling demands for bilingual education that parents had been making for decades.

Even as poor communities of color continue to face deep-seated racism within Chicago's public schools and despite the intense opposition that endures today, Rami believes that the 1968 protests have had lasting impact.

"I think that your legacy is defined by what you do, not by what someone does to contradict it," Rami says. "What you hope is that some young people will believe that the struggling, being a community organizer, being dedicated to improving the quality of the community, is their responsibility."

Since learning about the student uprisings from another teacher five years ago, School of the Art Institute of Chicago education professor Nicole Marroquin has plunged headfirst into the existing documentary accounts of the actions, producing a psychedelic-tinged poster highlighting the protests that's been shown in numerous Chicago galleries throughout this year, including currently at Uri-Eichen Gallery alongside work by Rami.

For several years, in partnership with Juarez teacher Paulina Camacho, she taught students at Juarez about the organizing work that helped to build their school and fostered their understanding of these earlier youth-led movements.

"[The students] were being regarded as less than human, and their history and their beliefs and interests weren't [considered] actually valid or worth examination, and the students had enough," Marroquin says. "Thankfully for us, they stood up and said, 'We're not gonna take it anymore.'"

Marroquin's classroom practice was relatively hands-off. Rather than lecturing students about the history of the protests, she instead gave them access to primary sources, including yearbooks and press clippings, to

allow them to make their own connections. Students have created a series of collages that may spur further inquiry into the protest's history, while leaving open the possibility of radical change in their own lives.

"I'm not interested in trying to portray history as this objective thing," Marroquin explains. "I'm just like, 'This is the evidence we've got, here are primary sources for you to work on.' The more investment that young people have in their education and the kinds of things they're learning, the better it's going to work out for them in the long run."

Through this process, Marroquin's students have raised their own questions about the enduring significance of student activism. One of the critical catalysts of the '68 protests was the fact that Latino students were designated as white until 1973, allowing schools like Harrison to "integrate" without transforming racial inequalities in education. Recognizing the black and Latino coalition building that deepened protests in the 60s and 70s, students began questioning why Juarez was almost 95 percent Latino, while Collins High School, three miles away in Douglas Park, was almost 100 percent black. Their inquiry led students to print a blown-up image of two black students standing in a stairwell at Harrison in 1984, the year it closed, and paste it up in a hallway at Juarez, a guerrilla protest against the resegregation of poor communities of color; their own school is now majority Latino, while other schools not too far away are majority black.

As today's students confront a half century of retrenchment and ongoing segregation, the students who fought in the 60s to transform Chicago's schools represent a vision for change that's as necessary to revisit as ever. Though systemic racism continues to limit black and brown futures in Chicago's classrooms, school protests reveal a structure that's more fragile than it often appears, capable of transformation when the lessons of history are applied to contemporary battles. Thanks to their experiences during those pivotal years, former students like Matthews—who's gone on to an extensive career in public service, including serving as COO of Prologue Inc., a community-based organization that runs several alternative and charter schools in Chicago—hope their experiences can carry onward into a new round of purposeful unrest.

"We're sort of like Moses now," Matthews said. "We're in this position of needing to be there to support and facilitate movements, but we're not the ones who are going to benefit from that as we go onto the new horizon of necessary changes." ■

 @tanner_howard



Tim Hopper and K. Todd Freeman

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RR **DOWNSTATE**
Through
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PM, Sat-Sun 3 and
7:30 PM, Tue 7:30;
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THEATER

Bruce Norris already has a Pulitzer

With *Downstate* he earns it.

By **TONY ADLER**

"[A]s if life isn't hard enough without us being deliberately hurtful and cruel to each other."
—Fred, in *Downstate*

It's the conventional wisdom that playwrights seldom receive a Pulitzer Prize for the play for which they receive the Pulitzer Prize. The pattern (based on no research at all) is that they get it for the play before that, or maybe the play two plays back. This was my reasoning when Bruce Norris won the 2011 Pulitzer for *Clybourne Park*, his cunning but not really earth-shattering riff on *A Raisin in the Sun*. I figured he was being rewarded for *The Pain and the Itch*, a genuine irritant from 2006.

It never occurred to me that he might be receiving the prize in trust, for a play he hadn't written yet. But that would seem to be the case, because *Downstate* would seem to be

that play.

Getting its world premiere now at Steppenwolf Theatre in an extraordinary production directed by Pam MacKinnon, *Downstate* is a nervy drama on a subject nobody wants to talk about. It's an unsentimental act of compassion and a devastating entertainment, a wry polemic and the darkest of dark comedies. As much as anything, it's a culmination, expressing Norris's sensibility more generously than any of his previous work.

The subject that dare not speak its name in *Downstate* is pedophilia, especially as it's regarded by our culture and punished by our laws. Four men—Fred, Dee, Gio, and Felix—are convicted sex offenders, having served out sentences for everything from father-daughter incest to carrying on a long-term gay relationship with a teenager. Now they're nominally free. But inasmuch as they have no

one else to take them in—and their category of criminal is, as somebody says, "fucked for life" anyway, what with public registries and ankle monitors and hostile neighbors and laws limiting their range of movement—the men share a group home maintained by a Christian charity.

Like any four strangers thrown together on the basis of connections that don't include affinity, their relationships are jerry-rigged. The youngest, Gio (Glenn Davis), believes he's just passing through, given his relatively less-heinous offense and implacable self-optimism. Felix (Eddie Torres) eats Cinnamon Toast Crunch, keeps to his room, and reads the Bible when he isn't whining his way through interviews with his parole officer (Cecilia Noble). An aging former actor-dancer who reached his pinnacle in a national touring company of *Peter Pan*, Dee (K. Todd Freeman) has cast

himself as housemother, supervising meds intake and even toilet visits while annihilating bullshit with his low-key, high-acid wit.

Then there's Fred (Francis Guinan). A classic type as pedophiles go, he's a mild-mannered older gentleman who used to teach piano to prepubescent boys, a couple of whom he abused. Fred went to prison, where another inmate broke his spine; now he putts around the group home in his electric wheelchair, listening to Chopin and snacking on Nutter Butters. At the start of the play he's entertaining guests of a sort: one of his now-grown former pupils, Andy (Tim Hopper), has tracked him down to confront him with something called a "reconciliation contract," chronicling Fred's crime as Andy remembers it. Andy wants Fred to sign the contract in acknowledgment even of the parts Fred recalls differently—because, as Andy tells him, "when you cast *doubt* on the accuracy of a victim's story . . . or even a single *detail* of that story . . . you reexpose them to the original trauma all over again."

Norris doesn't minimize the destructive criminality of abuse, though his four pedophiles aren't above trying to finesse their culpability. What he does, simply, is point out that Fred and the others are human beings who've suffered the consequences of their terrible actions with imprisonment, forfeiture, and vast shame. And that, unless society is prepared to kill them outright, it should designate a point at which the punishment can be declared over—if not for the culprits' sake then for our own, because fetishizing victimhood and demonizing enemies distorts us. As Norris comments in a program Q&A, discussing the present American zeitgeist: "I fear that what gets left out of the current national conversation is any mention of . . . forgiveness. We'd prefer to luxuriate in our righteous hatred for each other right now, in a way that feels cruel and grotesque and tribal."

Downstate has a problem I'm obliged to point out: a major surprise is telegraphed long, long before it occurs. Still, though the shock is ruined, a sense of fruition remains; after all, *Oedipus Rex* is rendered no less tragic by our awareness of how it turns out. For the rest, MacKinnon gives us a masterwork featuring stunning performances by Freeman, Hopper, and Torres in particular. And Norris's familiar iconoclasm has been transformed into something brave. **R**

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THEATER

Oy, it's a shanda!

Indecent tells the story of the Yiddish play that scandalized Broadway.

By **DAN JAKES**



© MICHAEL BROSILOW

One of the early revelations in Paula Vogel's acclaimed, based-on-a-true-story one-act drama is just how far and for how long *God of Vengeance*, Polish-Jewish author Sholem Asch's controversial 1907 play, trotted the globe before authorities branded it as criminally "indecent."

The young playwright's revolutionary (and first) script, which tells the story of a Torah-desecrating Jewish brothel owner whose daughter falls in love with a woman, was provocative right from its initial living room reading ("You are pouring petrol on the flames of anti-Semitism," argues one appalled actor played by David Darlow), but it was producible. In fact, *God of Vengeance*, though it laid bare what Asch (Noah LaPook) calls "Our streets. Our gutters. Our desires," played Berlin, Saint Petersburg, Constantinople, and Bratislava throughout the early 1900s without incident.

Only in 1923, when it arrived in the United States, the self-proclaimed land of the free, did vice squad thugs storm the wings of Broadway's Shubert Theatre and arrest the cast on obscenity charges.

In the preface to the published script, Vogel notes that the project started as a collaboration with director Rebecca Taichman that loosely focused on the trial. But the far more interesting story, she found, was the one about the erasure of Yiddish language and culture, rep sweats, the anti-immigrant hypocrisy of a country that prided itself as a light unto other nations for most of the 20th century, the Jewish-American experience

and "passing," and the radicalism of artists carrying on in impossible circumstances. Counterintuitively, there's more hope here and less grim agitation than audiences might expect.

Gary Griffin's kinetic, Brechtian, and often visually stunning production for Victory Gardens Theater uses text projections and a metatheatrical troupe of actors to piece together an immensely complicated time line that spans 50 years and many countries. In some ways, its tonal buoyancy and fluctuating scale remind me of Jay Torrence's brilliant *Burning Bluebeard*, which similarly chronicles a very specific doomed 20th-century production and asks timeless questions about artists and their resilience.

In Griffin's staging, grand, beautifully blocked stage pictures give way to quiet, devastating moments of realism, like the cast breaking and sharing what little bread they have before putting on a show in an attic in occupied Poland. And yet the actors display humor and self-deprecation in the face of hopeless despair. "If our performance does not please you," announces stage manager Lemml (Benjamin Magnuson), "please throw food! Kugel? Rugelach, anyone?"

Griffin's cast of performers and musicians are universally empathetic and stirring—particularly notable are Catherine LeFrere as Halina and Kiah Stern as Chana, the two lovers whose onstage affection sends Broadway into a puritanical fit. **A**

@DanEJakes



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THEATER

Equal opportunity offenders

Culture Clash goes on *An American Odyssey* to find immigrant voices that might otherwise go unheard.

NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR, the Chicago International Latino Theater Festival continues this weekend with the midwest premiere of *An American Odyssey* by the California-based performance trio Culture Clash. This program of character monologues is written and performed by Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas, and Herbert Sigüenza, who found-

ed Culture Clash in San Francisco's Mission district on May 5 (Cinco de Mayo), 1984.

The three men started the group "out of need," says Sigüenza. "We were all stage actors in the Bay area, and there were no roles for us. Auditions were few and far between." In 1990, encouraged by the response to their satirical shows, they relocated to Los Angeles to break into TV. But "every time we flirted with Hollywood we always went back to the theater," says Sigüenza, who is also playwright in residence at the San Diego Repertory Theatre. "That was where we could be free and do what we wanted. We consider ourselves playwrights and actors, not comedians."

Culture Clash—whose influences range from the San Francisco Mime Troupe and El Teatro Campesino to Monty Python—for the most part eschews partisan politics in its work. "Right now it's really difficult to do satire," says Sigüenza. "You can't make fun of [the current political scene] because it's not funny. It's already grotesque and surreal. . . . Our show is really about the immigrant, the unheard voices of America that you don't see in the mass media. . . . We're not hammering [the audience's] head with ideology. We always show two sides of the story. I think that's important. You've got to make everyone equal. We offend equally." —**ALBERT WILLIAMS**



Photos: Matthew Murphy

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ARTS & CULTURE

THEATER

RR Ripped from the headlines
A man creates havoc among dogs to
harass a woman because *All I Want Is One More
Meanwhile* . . .

The weirdest thing about this play, *Otherworld Theatre's* first full production in their new digs off Irving Park, is not that it's a superhero comic come to life, one blatant affront after another to the naturalistic bylaws concerning who can and can't fly and how to fight crime while flying or fight flying crimes in plays. It's how enjoyable and moving playwright Kelly Jean Fitzsimmons's excellently plotted saga turns out to be. *Perfectra* (Elizabeth C. MacDougald), once the envy of the universe with her robotically engineered superpowers and adoring fans, has reverted to mom status, grappling now not with evil but with the killer one-two of mom ills: love handles and plantar fasciitis. Stung by betrayal at *Perfectra's* sudden disappearance from the scene, twisted fanboy Canius (Dylan Schaeffer, diabolical cackler extraordinaire) turns his science fair-winning invention, a serum that controls dogs' behavior worldwide, into an evil tool for tracking down and exacting bloody vengeance upon his former idol. It's a little like watching the show *Rick and Morty* colonize the synapses of a talented young theater company in real time, but the upshot is a piece that sounds real depths, earns more laughs than groans, and despite utter transports of dorkitude gets rich performances out of a committed ensemble.

A note on casting: there's no way MacDougald is old enough to be her stage daughter Gaby Fernandez's mom. But there's also no way that the intrinsically fluffy and brilliant Rodrigo Arreola wasn't born to play MacDougald's man-size, scene-stealing dog. Nathan Pease directs. —**MAX MALLER** *ALL I WANT IS ONE MORE*



MEANWHILE . . . Through 10/27: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2:30 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 PM, *Otherworld Theatre*, 3914 N. Clark, 773-857-2116, otherworldtheatre.org, \$20 or pay what you can.

RR Full boil
Firebrand's *Caroline, or Change* revels in
tension, both racial and domestic.

It's 1963, and it's sweltering in the basement where Caroline Thibodeaux (Rashada Dawan) spends her days doing laundry—a full load a day from the Gellman family, washed in conditions that mimic the contradiction of Louisiana, underwater and aboveground all at once. The darkness and the heat of the basement, the smoke of Caroline's cigarette, the danger implicit in the iron she wields, and the bass of a singing dryer (Micheal Lovette) contribute to an atmosphere like a cauldron about to boil over. Down the stairs come further irritations: eight-year-old Noah Gellman (Alejandro Medina) and his new stepmother, Rose (Blair Robertson), the one clinging to Caroline as the only sure thing in his little life—"Caroline, who's always mad. . . . Caroline, who's stronger than my dad"—the other earnestly sublimating her anxiety about

her new role as mistress of the house into unwanted acts of charity, like sending Caroline home with cooked cabbage her kids won't eat and the change that Noah leaves in his pockets when his clothes go into the wash.

Caroline, or Change, with music by Jeanine Tesori and book by Tony Kushner, revels in tension, juxtaposing racial inequality with domestic unhappiness. Firebrand's production, directed by Lili-Anne Brown, is graced all-around with fearless, fantastic singers. Bre Jacobs turns in an especially strong performance as Caroline's eldest daughter, Emmie, who has all the impetuosity and petulance of a young girl eager for the change her mother has spent her life accepting can't and won't happen. —**IRENE HSIAO** *CAROLINE, OR CHANGE* Through 10/28: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, *the Den Theatre*, 1331 N. Milwaukee, 872-903-3473, firebrandtheatre.org, \$45.

A female rake's progress
Chicago Shakespeare's *Nell* Gwynn is so breezy it
almost floats away.

In this breezy, quasi-feminist 2015 historical comedy, based on the unlikely life of the titular 17th-century folk heroine—who, upon her death at age 37, had gone from prostitute to celebrated actress to favored mistress of King Charles II—British playwright Jessica Swale manages to make a two-and-a-half-hour play feel like a sketch.

Her problematic strategy is apparent in the opening minutes, as mouthy Nell, selling oranges in what we're asked to believe is the theater in which we're all sitting and where a play has just started, is plucked from the stalls by renowned actor Charles Hart, smitten by her "cheek," and given a crash course in emotive acting. It's a charming scene, especially given Scarlett Strallen's unfailingly sparkling performance as Nell, but it makes little sense. What happened to the play we were watching? Are we in the theater anymore? And more critically, since Nell expresses no interest in becoming an actress, why is she bothering?

The reason is simple: dramatic necessity. Nell's decision to tread the boards sets everything in motion, so Swale forces the moment to happen, as she does most everything else that ensues. As a result, every plot crux—the radical move to include a woman in a professional theater company, the dilemma of choosing between devoted lovers, even the goddamn dissolution of Parliament—resolves expediently rather than consequentially. Despite a strong cast, lavish design, and boisterous musical numbers, director Christopher Luscombe can't make the evening matter. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** *NELL GWYNN* Through 11/4: Wed 1 and 7:30 PM, Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM; also Sun 10/21 and 11/4, 6:30 PM, *Chicago Shakespeare Theater*, 800 E. Grand, 312-595-5600, chicagoshakes.com, \$48-\$88.

RR 'Being a woman is no job for a man'

Broadway-bound *Tootsie* manages to overcome
the unfortunate timing of its world premiere.

The timing of the pre-Broadway world premiere of *Tootsie*, days after the Brett Kavanaugh hearing, is unfortunate. The play itself is interesting, cheeky, and all kinds of complicated. Directed by Tony veteran Scott Ellis, with book and score by Robert Horn and David Yazbek, respectively, this loose adaptation of the classic 1982 comedy brings everything to the present day except the main character Michael's iconic drag costume. In the role made famous by Dustin Hoffman—who's currently embroiled in #MeToo harassment allegations—Santino Fontana initially plays the character of Michael Dorsey as a narcissistic jerk whose pursuit of "truth" has alienated everyone on Broadway. In a moment of desperation, he dresses as a woman, lands an audition and launches the career of his alter ego, Dorothy Michaels.

While masquerading quite artfully as a rapid-fire sitcom built for even non-musical lovers, the production covers a host of thorny social issues. Most broadly, it's a really fun, irreverent parody of Broadway and the musical form itself, with Reg Rogers playing Ron Carlisle, the epitome of a chauvinistic, holier-than-thou director. A layer deeper, the main conceit of cross-dressing feels less wacky and more loaded in light of today's more inclusive views of sexual and gender identity. At its core, though, the story is a feminist win disguised in slapstick. Having a male character discover and internalize what it means to be a woman moving through the world, from high heels to harassment, allows the show to preach beyond the choir and create allies along the way. Michael says it best: "Being a woman is no job for a man." —**MARISSA OBERLANDER** *TOOTSIE* Through 10/14: Wed 2 and 7:30 PM, Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM, Tue 7:30 PM, *Cadillac Palace Theatre*, 151 W. Randolph, 312-977-1700, broadwayinchicago.com, \$32-\$231.

**Another baby boomer recalls his
lost youth**

We're Only Alive for a Short Amount of Time is
less a memoir than a reliving.

For a good chunk of its 90-minute length, David Cale's autobiographical monologue looks exactly like your typical boom-generation gay coming-of-age story. Young David is the sensitive product of a dysfunctional marriage. His mom, Barbara, is a creative soul living the "wrong life." Dad Ron drinks away his waking hours, trying to self-medicate an adulthood spent under the thumb of his own thuggish, successful father. Along with little brother Simon, they live 30 miles and a world away from London, in the declining industrial city of Luton, known condescendingly as "the only northern town in the south" of England. David takes refuge in nursing sick animals, breeding finches (300 at a time!), and, yes, listening to Judy Garland albums. As a teen he makes the switch from Judy to Joni.

Then, at a remarkably late moment in the evening, something truly, horrifically bad happens. Things certainly get more interesting and less generic, but not that much actually changes. The tone is as dreamily elegiac as ever. The focus remains on the sensitive—if also rather dissociated—youth. In a way, the bad event seems as liberating as it is tragic, which would be a development

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ARTS & CULTURE



Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga in *A Star Is Born*

MOVIES

Love hurts

But in *A Star Is Born*, it's labor that breaks your heart.

By NOAH BERLATSKY

In a pivotal scene in the new version of *A Star Is Born*, unknown singer-songwriter Ally (Lady Gaga) and a buddy arrive at their food-service kitchen job dressed in unflattering clothes, talking excitedly about anything but work. Their boss trudges by and says snarkily, “You’re late!” Ally is furious. “I’m late?” she says. “I’m *late*!” She quits on the spot, stomps out of the restaurant, and does what her new boyfriend, rock star Jackson Maine (Bradley Cooper, who also directs), has been urging her to do—get on a plane, fly out to his latest gig, sing to a packed stadium, and leave her life of drudgery behind forever.

Ally’s escape encapsulates the exhilarating fantasy of stardom—and it’s no accident that it centers on work. As Matt Stahl writes in *Unfree Masters: Popular Music and the Politics of Work*, “work, for most people, most of the time, is not particularly free, enjoyable or fulfilling.” Work is a grind, and that grind eats up most of our lives. The bulk of our waking

time on earth is spent doing things we don’t want to do at the behest of people we’d sooner avoid. “I was raised in a ‘no you don’t’ world / Overrun with rules,” Barbra Streisand sings in the 1976 version of the film. But singers get to break those rules. As Stahl says, “the stars of popular music often appear to be so free and to be doing such enjoyable, expressive, and fulfilling work that it almost seems strange to think of them as working people.”

A Star Is Born is about how Ally escapes from alienation and ends up embodying freedom by expressing herself fully in her work—so fully, in fact, that her work and her self become inseparable. But it’s also about how even stars are stuck in what Stahl calls “stable structures of authority and subordination.” Stars may not seem to be working, but they are—which is the tragedy of the film.

That tragedy is by now well-worn; this is the fourth iteration of the movie. The 2018 version hits the familiar marks, following especially

in the footsteps of the 70s Kris Kristofferson-Barbra Streisand version. Cooper plays an aging alcoholic rock star and songwriter. He stumbles (more or less literally) on singer-songwriter Ally performing in a drag bar and falls in love with her talent, her songwriting, and her nose. After he pushes and goads her into performing onstage with him, her career takes off, while his sinks into a bottle, *Behind the Music* style.

In comparison to the ’76 version, the film benefits from the fact that Cooper has a much greater range, both vocally and as an actor, than the mumbling, shambolic Kristofferson. But the 2018 script is also sharper because it’s more grounded in the dynamics of labor.

One of the first times we see Ally is when her boss forces her to take out the garbage—the definition of scut work. The drag bar where Jack meets her is her former employer; she used to work there as a waitress. The drag queens loved her so much they let her perform with them, which she does with over-the-top fabulousness, wearing false eyelashes and a leg-baring outfit. Before the film even starts, Ally has already, on a small scale, gone from drab drone to outsize star, donning elaborate makeup and costumes to express her true self (both in the narrative and, of course, as the real-life Lady Gaga.)

Even the transition from waitress to (small)

star pales, though, before the duets Ally and Jack sing together, belting out their ecstatic feelings for each other in real time as the crowds cheer and the money rolls in. Work is love; love is work. That’s not just a romance, it’s a vision of capitalism overthrown.

Ally’s work becomes more fulfilling; Jack’s less so. By the middle of the movie he’s no longer singing his own songs to packed houses. Instead he’s appearing in a gig with a Roy Orbison cover band. He doesn’t even get to sing himself; he’s just a hired guitarist, off on the side, doing what someone else says for someone else’s glory—which is what most of us do for a living. He refers to the gig as “one of those paid things, soul-crushing work.”

It’s not Jack’s alienated labor that leads to the film’s tragic conclusion, though; it’s Ally’s. As Stahl writes (mentioning Lady Gaga by name, as it happens), even when a pop star embodies freedom, she is also “a political and economic actor, a working person whose contractually governed relationship to her company is sometimes one of real subordination.” Ally’s oleaginous manager, Rez (Ravi Gavron), wants her to dye her hair and perform with backup dancers. “You can’t go rogue on me,” he tells her, as bosses will.

Ally resists to some degree; “I am who I am,” she declares, by which she means her music, and her work, have to come from inside her. She sings because she wants to sing, not because someone tells her to.

But there are also limits to Ally’s autonomy. Rez makes her take dancing lessons; she has to make appearances and recordings. Toward the end of the film she wants to bring the recovering Jack on tour with her, and Rez unambiguously vetoes the idea. He then privately tells Jack that he’s wrecking Ally’s career, leading to the disastrous finale.

When a star is born, she captures our dreams, but also something of our fears. The movie is about aspiration toward true unfettered autonomy and escape from that kitchen. But it’s also about the fear that there’s another boss waiting after you get off that plane.

Jack’s brother, Bob (Sam Elliott), says that no one is to blame for Jack’s fate but Jack. That isn’t exactly true, though. Jack’s alcoholism isn’t anyone’s fault, but management’s refusal to accommodate his illness is. Jack at the end seemed at least to have a chance against his disease. It’s work that eats him. In *A Star Is Born*, love hurts. But it’s labor that breaks your heart. **A**

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worth confronting if it were in fact confronted. But Cale's story never widens out, much less fractures. His big trauma figures only as a stop along his peculiar way.

And perhaps that's how he wants us to understand it. There's a stick-figure quality to the show in Robert Fall's staging, like a picture book drawn by a child. Despite the presence of a sophisticated six-piece band, Cale's songs stay simple; in fact they come across as the same song given a dozen iterations. Cale himself projects an artless physicality, at once goofy and solemn, especially when he sticks out his hands to approximate flying. Maybe *We're Only Alive* is better understood as a reliving than a memoir. —**TONY ADLER** *WE'RE ONLY ALIVE FOR A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME* Through 10/21: Wed 7:30 PM, Thu 2 and 7:30 PM, Fri 8 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 and 7:30 PM; also Tue 10/9, 7:30 PM; no performance Thu 10/18, 2 PM, Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn, 312-443-3800, goodmantheatre.com, \$25-\$70.

RR A matter of life and death
As an improv exercise, *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* is closer to the Stanford Prison Experiment than to *Saturday Night Live*.

Interrobang Theatre Project presents Iranian playwright Nassim Soleimanpour's experimental one-person show, in which a different actor is handed a script he or she hasn't read and asked to involve the audience in a drama that may or may not result in the actor's demise.

The setup is simple: an actor, a script, a table with



two glasses of water and a vial of an unknown powder, a chair, and a stepladder. Soleimanpour's acerbic and clever exploration of control and free will transforms these rudimentary props and the participants who wield them into a powerful statement about the plight of an individual in an oppressive society.

Stephanie Shum ably navigated these perilous waters on the night I saw the show. I was compelled to participate (it was not a request); I was #9, the bear. That the audience has to be part of the show might on the surface make one think of the comedy improv form, but Soleimanpour's intent is the polar opposite of the average Second City sketch. While the script instructs those who remain seated to clap, their former neighbors onstage are accessories to a potential crime rather than straight men there to sell a joke. It's a lot closer to the Stanford Prison Experiment than to *Saturday Night Live*, but it's as compelling and thought-provoking an hour as I've spent at the theater this year. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** *WHITE RABBIT, RED RABBIT* Through 11/12: Mon 8 PM, the Den Theater, 1331 N. Milwaukee, 312-219-4140, interrobangtheatreproject.com, \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. **R**

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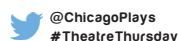
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BISBEE '17 ★★★★★

Directed by Robert Greene. In English and subtitled Spanish. Fri 10/5–Thu 10/11. PG, 113 min. Music Box, 3733 N. Southport, 773-871-6604, musicboxtheatre.com, \$9 - \$11.



MOVIES

Group therapy

Bisbee '17 explores the soul of a town haunted by its history.

By **BEN SACHS**

To date, most of director Robert Greene's films have been self-reflexive documentaries about the creation of performances. *Fake It So Real* (2011) looked at a group of amateur wrestlers in North Carolina as they worked on a WWE-style stage show; *Actress* (2014) profiled stage and TV performer Brandy Burre; and *Kate Plays Christine* (2016) followed actress Kate Lyn Sheil as she learned about the late TV news anchor Christine Chubbuck in order to play her in an imaginary film. Greene's latest, *Bisbee '17*, also concerns performance, surveying various townspeople in the title Arizona community as they prepare to reenact the Bisbee Deportation of 1917, a horrific historical episode in which roughly 2,000 deputized men rounded up almost 1,200 striking copper miners, loaded them onto freight trains, and deposited them in the New Mexico desert, leaving them to die. Yet the film is about way more than the reenactment—it's about the ways that people create and use history and how America's past interacts with its present. It feels like the grand statement

that Greene has been building up to this whole decade, bringing together his various thematic interests (not just performance, but also self-delusion, education, and the quirks of regional American life) to symphonic effect.

Divided into six chapters, *Bisbee '17* intertwines events leading up to the reenactment with profiles of the people involved in it and lessons about the deportation itself. The movie doesn't build to a sense of horror; Greene is upfront about the ugliness of Bisbee's history. He opens on a note of dread, then deepens his community portrait so that viewers can get past their initial shock. The film begins with onscreen text describing the deportation in blunt terms and noting Bisbee's history of xenophobia (many of the town's copper miners were immigrants from Mexico and eastern Europe, Greene informs us, and they faced widespread discrimination before they were deported). Within the next ten minutes, Greene profiles Sue Ray, a Bisbee resident whose grandfather, deputized by sheriff Harry Wheeler, arrested his own brother for deportation. A local historian, interviewed

Bisbee '17

shortly after this episode, ruminates on the "necessity" of violence in "taming" the desert and its indigenous population so that whites could settle in the American southwest. His statement anticipates the film's revelation that Wheeler invoked a bogus "law of necessity" to justify the deportation.

The film's introduction also includes a quote from author Colin Dickey: "Cities that are haunted . . . seem to straddle past and present as though two versions of the same city are overlaid on top of each other." As *Bisbee '17* proceeds, that statement comes to seem literal. Greene visits the nearby city of Tombstone and documents a reenactment of the gunfight at the OK Corral, suggesting that this entire region of Arizona is obsessed with events of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Back in Bisbee, Greene profiles employees of a local hotel and the city courthouse; both claim to have encountered ghosts in their places of employment. The director's style is appropriately ghostly. Greene often employs the Steadicam, whose eerily smooth movement has long been used to evoke the supernatural, during scenes where subjects portray historical figures, and Keegan DeWitt's chilling score conveys a sense of eeriness throughout. One gets the impression that the people of Bisbee have been trying to work through the legacy of the deportation—as well as the knowledge that their community was capable of such monumental cruelty—long before Greene arrived.

Some of the people Greene meets seem incapable of facing up to that cruelty, and their callousness can be downright disturbing. Ray's sons Steven and Mel claim to be neutral with regards to the deportation, even though their great-granduncle was among the deported. James West, a former employee of the private prison industry who plays one of Sheriff Wheeler's deputies in the reenactment, likens the deportation to his own efforts to "keep people safe." (Like Sue Ray, he baselessly assumes that the striking miners, many of whom had been radicalized by representatives of the IWW, posed a violent threat to the rest of the town.) The ugliest sentiments come from Richard "Dick" Graeme, a retired senior vice president of Lumina Copper Corp., who acknowledges that the deportation was illegal

but believes that it was the right thing to do. Graeme agrees to play Phelps Dodge Corporation president Walter Douglas, who likely originated the idea of deporting the strikers, and the apparent pride he brings to the role may be the most frightening part of the film.

The subject granted the most screen time in *Bisbee '17* is a young Mexican-American man named Fernando Serrano who's lived in the town since childhood and now works as a cook. Greene notes early on Serrano's personal investment in the historical reenactment; after reading a text stating that nearly 90 percent of the deportees were immigrants, Serrano shares that his mother was deported when he was just seven years old. Serrano also admits when he's first presented onscreen that he'd never heard about the deportation until Greene came along, but he seems to grow more interested in the event the more he learns about it. Playing one of the striking miners, Serrano gives the best performance of all the reenactors—there's a definite passion to his line readings and a poignantly understated dignity to his comportment. (He has a good singing voice too, as evidenced by his performances of some classic IWW songs.) He's an ideal audience identification figure, as he overcomes his ignorance of history to become actively involved in historical recovery.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the film is that Greene never overtly addresses America's current political climate, which is as divided and angry as Bisbee's was 100 years ago. Yet the zeitgeist of the Trump-era U.S. hangs unmistakably over *Bisbee '17*—one might say that the movie is haunted by the present as well as the past. Amid all the disturbing truths and invocations of hatred, Greene still manages to find a silver lining to his historical project. Near the end of the film, one of the players likens the reenactment to a really big group therapy session, and though he seems to be joking, the man does have a point. After all, a country's history is one thing that all its citizens share, regardless of each one's political views. Greene suggests that confronting history collectively may be a population's first step in working together to move forward. This conclusion dovetails with the director's observation (sometimes frightening, sometimes stirring) that we are always acting out history, whether we realize it or not. **A**

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ARTS & CULTURE



Science Fair

authoritarianism. The resulting documentary contains profiles of a range of individuals, including people who lost family members to Stalin's purges and young adults at a summer getaway celebrating Vladimir Putin. Gorter suggests that Putin's strong grip on the public mind has a lot to do with Stalin's surge in popularity in the 21st century, though she makes this point with commendable subtlety—never does the film devolve into Michael Moore-style grandstanding. Some of the sequences, particularly those in which Gorter visits mass graves near former gulag sites, are chilling, but generally this reflects an air of ambivalence. The most revealing moment may be when a high school student admits he has a hard time hating Stalin because his town was built by men Stalin imprisoned. In Russian with subtitles.

—**BEN SACHS** 119 min. *Fri 10/5, 7 and 9 PM; Sat 10/6, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 10/7, 1, 3, 5, and 7 PM; Mon 10/8-Thu 10/11, 7 and 9 PM. Facets Cinematheque*

MOVIES

RR Heavy Trip

Turo is the singer in a metal band that's been practicing regularly for 12 years but has never played a gig; he's so anxious about performing for an audience that he throws up at the mere suggestion. What's more, as long-haired outsiders in their small Finnish village, he and his bandmates face constant ridicule and police profiling. But just after recording their first demo, the group has a serendipitous meeting with a Norwegian festival promoter, and everything seems to change. Like *Spinal Tap* before it, *Heavy Trip* is often at its best when it pokes fun at the musical subculture it depicts, but you don't need to be a metalhead to get in on the laughs. With its sometimes blood-soaked physical comedy, an epic chase across Scandinavia, and a heshers-meets-girl love plot thrown in for good measure, this is one of the funniest buddy films of the year. Juuso Laatio and Jukka Vidgren directed.

—**JAMIE LUDWIG** 92 min. *Fri 10/5, 10 and 11:59 P; Sat 10/6, 9:45 and 11:59 PM; Sun 10/7-Thu 10/11, 9:45 PM. Music Box Theatre*

RR Science Fair

Inspiration and suspense abound in this documentary, which follows brilliant teenagers from around the world as they compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. Approximately 1,700 finalists from 78 countries and territories vie for the top prize, worth \$75,000. The milieu is intense, the stakes are high, and the science prodigies themselves are fascinating. They're far more intelligent and driven than the average teen, yet their emotional reactions and maturity levels seem to track with other kids their age. They want to change the world, crush their competition, and reap the rewards—and not necessarily in that order—which is great fun to watch. Codirectors Cristina Constantini and Darren Foster keep the action zippy, with a balanced mix of uplifting and surprising moments.

—**LEAH PICKETT** PG, 90 min. *Fri 10/5, 4 and 7:45 PM; Sat 10/6, 4:45 PM; Sun 10/7, 3 PM; Mon 10/8, 6 PM; Tue 10/9, 8 PM; Wed 10/10, 6 PM; Thu 10/11, 8:15 PM; Fri 10/12, 2 and 6 PM; Sat 10/13, 4:45 PM; Sun 10/14, 3 PM; Mon 10/15, 6 PM; Tue 10/16, 8 PM; Wed 10/17, 6 PM; and Thu 10/18, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

The Old Man & the Gun

Throughout his movie stardom Robert Redford has often been drawn to characters whose flaws suggest dark undercurrents beneath the charm and chiseled good looks. His proclaimed farewell to acting is this beguiling heist film in which he portrays real-life bank robber and jailbreaker Forrest Tucker, an elderly gentleman bandit who wields affability, not bullets, during a rollicking early 1980s crime spree. Adapting David Grann's 2003 *New Yorker* article, writer-director David Lowery (*Pete's Dragon*, *A Ghost Story*) uses Super 16 millimeter to evoke the rough-and-tumble look of late 70s/early 80s indie films, and gives gemlike supporting roles to Danny Glover and Tom Waits as Tucker's "Over-the-Hill" gang. Casey Affleck as the lawman in hot pursuit, and Sissy Spacek as the horse farmer whose heart gets snatched. But mostly this is a career-capping showcase for Redford, who with subtlety and ease goes out in style after a great long run.

—**ANDREA GRONVALL** PG-13, 93 min. *Thu 10/4, 7 PM; Fri 10/5-Sun 10/7, 11:20 AM, 1:10, 2:10, 4:10, 5:10, 7:10, 8:10, 10 PM; Mon 10/8-Thu 10/11, 1:10 PM, 2:10 PM, 4:10 PM, 5:10 PM, 7:10 PM, 8:10 PM, 10 PM. Landmark's Century Centre*

A Star Is Born

For his directorial debut—the third official remake of William A. Wellman's 1937 showbiz melodrama—Bradley Cooper really seems to have learned from George Cukor's 1954 version of the story: his wide-screen compositions are bold and expansive, the emotional content nuanced and perceptive, and the musical numbers work to deepen one's understanding of the characters. The film pales in comparison to Cukor's masterpiece (but then, what showbiz melodrama doesn't?), in large part because Cooper, playing the self-destructive star who's unable to handle his wife's success when it begins to eclipse his own, doesn't convey the repressed self-loathing that made James Mason so poignant in the role. Pop singer Lady Gaga is quite good as the wife, however; she subtly and convincingly manages the character's transformation from vulnerable ingenue to self-confident celebrity. The effective supporting cast includes Sam Elliott, Andrew Dice Clay, and Anthony Ramos.

—**BEN SACHS** R, 135 min. *AMC Dine-In Theatres Block 37, ArcLight Chicago, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14 Theaters, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Crown Village 18, Davis, Ford City, Landmark's Century Centre, River East 21, Showplace 14, Galewood Crossings, Showplace ICON, 600 N. Michigan, Webster Place 11*

The Red Soul

Responding to a recent survey that found roughly half of Russia's population considers Joseph Stalin their favorite historical figure, director Jessica Gorter set out to investigate the country's relationship to its legacy of

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SEN MORIMOTO MAKES CROWDED SONGS ALL BY HIMSELF

The Chicago polymath's mix of hip-hop, pop, prog, and jazz has won over international entertainment platform 88 Rising, but for now he's sticking with his friends at local indie Sooper Records.

By LEOR GALIL

PHOTOS AND COLLAGES BY
RYAN EDMUND



In July, Sen Morimoto quit his job as a bar-back at Big Star with no plans to look for other work—the 24-year-old singer, rapper, producer, and multi-instrumentalist had decided to try supporting himself as a musician. Since moving to Chicago in 2014, he'd been content to hold down restaurant jobs and take opportunities to work on his music—an adventurous blend of hip-hop, jazz, prog rock, and pop—wherever he could find them. He was ambivalent about promoting his songs, and he preferred to work alone: he played every note himself, recorded every track himself, and released all his music himself.

In 2016 a small label put out vinyl and cassette editions of an album Morimoto had self-released digitally, but it wasn't till late last year that he worked with a label from step one—he agreed to release his album *Cannonball!* through upstart Chicago indie Sooper Records, where he has friends. That alone would've been a big step toward a potential career in music, but soon Morimoto would get the chance to make a giant leap: even before the album dropped, it had attracted the attention of 88 Rising, a fast-growing international entertainment platform dedicated to Asian musicians. But while *Cannonball!* ended up being coreleased by 88 Rising in May, Morimoto stopped short of joining the company's roster. The leap, if it were going to happen for him, would have to wait. ➔



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That's not to say the association with 88 Rising hasn't given Morimoto a boost. He hasn't done much solo touring to support the album—just a few short jaunts around the midwest so far—and in the three months after it dropped, he played only four shows. Nonetheless, the Summer Sonic Festival in Japan reached out to him directly and booked him for a set on August 19 in Chiba, just outside Tokyo—the same day as Chance the Rapper, Thundercat, J Balvin, and Nickelback. The endorsement from 88 Rising was already getting Morimoto gigs he almost certainly wouldn't have landed without it. He got paid enough to travel with a four-piece band, and he could afford to fly his father to the show from Massachusetts.

His parents weren't sure what to make of it. "They're like, 'You make money doing this?'" Morimoto says. "I was like, 'No, this one time I do—this is the only one so far.' My dad got on the phone and was like, 'So, like, can I retire?' I was like, 'No, absolutely not.'"

Launched in 2015 by Sean Miyashiro, formerly of defunct Vice electronic-music site Thump, 88 Rising releases music, but it's not strictly a label. It also manages artists, produces music videos and video interviews, and handles marketing. In just a few years, it's tapped into a huge international fan base for pop music made by Asians. So far its biggest success has been Brian Imanuel, a 19-year-old rapper from Jakarta, Indonesia, better known as Rich Brian—this winter 88 Rising released his debut album, *Amen*, and it peaked at 18 on the *Billboard* 200.

During the advance promo push for *Cannonball!*, a publicist working for Sooper pitched 88 Rising about hosting the video for the album's title track on the company's YouTube page, which now has more than two million subscribers. Morimoto says that soon after 88 Rising posted his video, Miyashiro offered him a deal.

"He was like, 'We fuck with you, do you wanna be on the roster?'" Morimoto recalls. (Miyashiro wasn't available to comment for this story.) "I was like, 'Honestly, no. I'm 24. I've been doing this forever myself, and I don't really feel comfortable. I'm not gonna sign something.' He was like, 'That's OK.'" Miyashiro worked out a plan for 88 Rising to support Morimoto without signing him, which included coreleasing *Cannonball!*

At the end of September, Morimoto flew to Los Angeles to play at 88 Rising's inaugural Head in the Clouds Music & Arts Festival. And this week he'll hit the road as part of the 88 Degrees & Rising Tour, performing solo with a saxophone and an MPC—his leg of the trip ends in Chicago at the Aragon Ballroom on Sunday, October 14. He'll then fly to Austin to begin a three-week tour with Sooper cofounder Nnamdi Ogbonnaya, which culminates at the Empty Bottle on Friday, November 9.

Though Morimoto chose to keep some distance from 88 Rising, he's become more involved with Sooper: a couple months ago, he signed a contract to become a co-owner. "I felt honored, honestly," Morimoto says. "I never thought I would run a record label."

Morimoto's parents met in the early 80s at a Japanese music store in San Francisco. His father, a Japanese native, was working there when his mother, a white American born in Japan, walked in looking for a job. She didn't get one—he thought her Japanese was too poor—but a few years later, having separately moved back to Japan, they began a courtship after running into each other by

chance in Kyoto. They were living there when they had their third child, Sen, in 1993.

Shortly after he turned one, Morimoto's family moved to the States, bought a Volkswagen microbus, and hit the road to find a place to settle down. They landed in Wendell, Massachusetts, which had a population of 848 in the 2010 census. "I always talk about how Wendell is like the Shire or something," Morimoto says. "It's this amazing untouched thing in the wilderness that is so not affected by the rest of the world." Unfortunately, that also meant there wasn't much to do, unless you made it yourself.

Morimoto's parents enrolled him in the Amherst Japanese Language School, but he struggled to keep up with other students his age. "For the first few years, they all had to speak English to teach me anything," he says. He proved a quicker learner when it came to music. He picked up the saxophone when he was ten, and a couple years later he began private classes with Charles Neville of the Neville Brothers—every Saturday after Japanese, Morimoto and his friend Kai Matsuda would travel to nearby Huntington to take lessons in a yurt outside Neville's house.

"Something really cool that he taught us a lot about was understanding a song, or the responsibility that you have when you're playing a song that you didn't write—to communicate what it's supposed to be communicating," Morimoto says. "It gave me a different kind of appreciation for intention in music."

At the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School, Morimoto dabbled in piano and played in R&B combos. Outside school he taught himself guitar and drums, and as a teenager he began rapping. He also played in a few bands. He covered the keys in Goat Boy, which made what he calls "sad guitar-guy music." He drummed in Big Nils, a noise-punk group fronted by Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon's daughter, Coco Gordon Moore. He played sax in LuxDeluxe, an Americana-tinged outfit that occasionally backed a family



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friend to play out as a Bruce Springsteen cover band.

Today Morimoto is one of the most promising young artists in Chicago because of the euphoric blend of genres in his music, but as a teen he tended to compartmentalize those interests.

"I was rapping on other peoples' beats, I was playing in rock bands, I was doing jazz stuff—very minimally, on the side," he says. At

19 he released a solo hip-hop EP that sneaked in some jazz flavor. He was rapping

as Jap (a name he now

calls "questionable at best"), and his EP, *How to Spot a Jap*, took its name

from a World War II pamphlet created by the U.S.

Army. It was the first time Morimoto had recorded his

own rap instrumentals, which drew upon his experience playing

jazz. "It's another thing I can't listen to now," he says. "It's such a specific time,

where I was very confused about what all those parts of me were trying to

say." He's since removed the EP from the Internet.

Morimoto never went to college. He moved to Chicago

at 20, at the suggestion of his girlfriend at the time—she

was enrolled at the School of the Art Institute. He arrived in Jan-

uary 2014, in the middle of a polar vortex, and shared a Wicker Park loft

with strangers.

"I got here and I was like, 'Oh, fuck, I made a mistake,'" he says.

"Not really. It wasn't that bad—because I had no friends, I never had to go outside."

He got a job as a server at a sushi restaurant, and when the owners found

out he rapped, they asked him to perform at one of their favorite bars—one of the line cooks

was enlisted as his DJ. He didn't know anybody else

there, and he left after the DJ puked on himself. "That was my first show," he says.

Morimoto's fortunes changed when he played at East Room in February 2015—he says maybe five people were there, but one of them was rapper and singer Rich Jones, who knows just about everybody. Morimoto made a good first impression on his future friend: "I see this little tiny guy in a Darth Maul shirt and a white baseball cap, and he's rapping, he's singing, and he's playing off of a sampler—this person was controlling everything and doing everything really well," Jones says. "I had to know who this guy was."

Jones booked Morimoto for his monthly hip-hop series ➔

continued from 27

at Tonic Room, All Smiles, in July 2015. “That was kind of a weird moment for me,” Morimoto says. “I met some people that ended up being a part of my life.” One of them was Nnamdi Ogbonnaya. “His voice was amazing,” Ogbonnaya says. “Everyone was like, ‘Who is this kid?’ I don’t think anyone really knew who he was.”

Morimoto wrote and recorded his music in his bedroom. “It was a ‘room,’” he says, pronouncing it in scare quotes. “It was one of those bedrooms that’s just pieces of wood and cardboard.” In November 2015, he dropped *For Me & Ladie*, an engrossing, effervescent album that highlights his skill as a vocalist—he frequently swerves from honeyed R&B cooing to blustery, rapid rapping. He released it as simply “Morimoto,” and every note is his except for a guest verse from rapper-producer Tree, whom he’d contacted via Twitter.

“I didn’t have anyone to collaborate with, really,” he says. “I think that’s why I don’t like a lot of it now. I think feedback is a really important part of editing an album.” Transatlantic indie label Tip Top Recordings rereleased the entire album on vinyl and cassette in 2016, but Morimoto only has half its 12 songs up on Bandcamp.

Morimoto slowly made connections to local musicians, who then became collaborators. In 2016, rapper Qari of Hurt Everybody moved into Morimoto’s loft, and they quickly grew close. “Living with Qari really helped,” Morimoto says. “He would show me things he was working on. He’d be like, ‘I made this,’ and it would be a tiny vocal idea, a four-bar thing and a beat. I’d be like, ‘This is amazing—this is so good.’ He’d be like, ‘Yeah, I don’t know.’ I’d be like, ‘Oh word, that’s normal. OK, I can show you this thing.’ But even to this day I’m not that good at sharing work before it’s done.”

In December 2016, the roommates dropped a collaborative EP, *Don’t Buy That*, where Qari handled the vocals and Morimoto produced the music. On the EP *It’s Late*, which Morimoto released in May 2017, Qari provides the lone outside contribution. “It’s called *It’s Late* ‘cause I recorded it all between the hours of three and six in the morning,” Morimoto says. “I recorded the vocals in bed, lying down, like, trying to sleep.” It was the first solo release he still liked after it came out.

Morimoto wasn’t happy about what he saw as the sorry state of the music business, though, and he was far from sure he wanted a place in it. “I was feeling really jaded about how music works and what even my intention is behind putting out music on social media, or the things you do to make that a possibility for your life—to be a musician,” he says. “I felt like it was all really ugly.”

He did, however, trust Ogbonnaya and Sooper Records. Morimoto wrote and played a saxophone arrangement on Sooper’s breakthrough release, the 2017 Ogbonnaya solo album *Drool*, and when Ogbonnaya and fellow Sooper founder Glenn Curran asked to work with Morimoto on his own music, he listened. “Sen’s really one of the few people that Nnamdi was like, ‘Yo, we have to work with this guy—I don’t know too many other people like him,’” Curran says.

Curran and Ogbonnaya broached the subject last summer. “Sooper hit me up,” Morimoto says. “They were like, ‘Hey, I know you make a million songs—do you have a record?’ And I was like, no, but I’m gonna tell them yes so that I make it.”

For a couple months, he spent his nights at a Humboldt Park practice space he shares, working out new material between naps till the morning. “I would just go and play saxophone as

fast as I could for a while as kind of a meditation thing, and then try to write a song, and try to be more honest—or more expressive in general,” he says. With the exception of a couple tracks he’d previously written (“People Watching” and “Picture of a Painting”), he made all of *Cannonball!* in those months.

As usual, Morimoto controlled every aspect of the music on *Cannonball!*, which features just two outside contributors—local soul singer Kaina and Massachusetts rapper Reason Being. Kaina has been collaborating with Morimoto since January 2017, when she sang backup at a Lincoln Hall show where he first played with a live band. They’ve

since become friends, and Kaina sees similarities in their approaches. “I have a hard time allowing myself to be in a space where I can trust people with my feelings,” she says. “I think that was part of the way we generally started making music together—he understood my feelings of being nervous about it.”

Generally labels hear demos or rough mixes long before an album is done, but Morimoto, in keeping with his borderline-reclusive work habits, didn’t share anything with Sooper till he’d finished mixing and mastering the entirety of *Cannonball!* this past winter. Immediately Ogbonnaya and Curran knew they had their next flagship release. “I saw a funny, rare side of Nnamdi in response to the music—in totally a joyous, happy way, there was almost this sense of friendly competition,” Curran says. “I feel like he heard the record, and Nnamdi was just like, ‘Damn, that’s better than my album.’ The bar was just risen. I think he said something like, ‘That fucked me up. Shit.’”

When it came to promoting the record, though, Morimoto seemed determined to take the path of most resistance. “When I showed them the record, they were like, ‘What do you want to be the single?’” he says. “I was like, ‘Oh, you know, the longest, hardest one to listen to, the six-minute complete shit-storm track.’ Which was so funny—at the time they were like,

‘Yeah, I feel like there are some really catchy songs on here. You sure?’ I was like, ‘I think it’s really the right vibe.’”

Morimoto made a video for that song, “Cannonball,” while his family was visiting his sister in Hawaii; his brother directed it, and his parents make an appearance too.

Sooper struggled to find an outlet to premiere the video, and it felt like forever before the publicist they’d hired to promote the album, Ryan Cunningham at Biz3, finally got a bite. “As soon as 88 Rising got behind the first video, we had a lot more success,” Curran says. “When 88 Rising dropped the video, all of a sudden all these other outlets who weren’t interested in it before were like, ‘Oh wait, this is cool.’”

Morimoto didn’t know much about 88 Rising, but when the company expressed an interest in working with him, he did some research and looked at what fans had to say on Reddit. “There’s a bunch of people who were like, ‘This feels so good to have an entity that is expressing what I’m feeling, and engaging with new music, and someone I can relate to,’” Morimoto says.

Sooper had been ready to drop *Cannonball!* in March, but when 88 Rising got involved everyone agreed to push it back till May. The relationship with 88 Rising has helped Sooper get meetings with labels that aren’t quite as tiny as it is. “We’ve taken any meeting we can,” Ogbonnaya says. “It’s been to the advantage of the label, because I think we’re gonna work with some cool folks that have the same ideas we have. Hopefully, next year we can do something bigger.” And having Morimoto involved in planning Sooper’s future helps. “I think that he could possibly be, for lack of a better word, a tastemaker,” Ogbonnaya says.

While in Japan for the Summer Sonic Festival, Morimoto played a separate headlining show at Space Odd in Tokyo. His brother, his father, and several members of his extended family were in the crowd, where they got to hear dozens of strangers singing along to his songs; onstage he was joined by some of his closest friends from Chicago. “I was like, ‘This is not real—this is what happens at the end of *Gossip Girl*,’” Morimoto says. “I got back and I was like, ‘Holy fuck, life is really different all of a sudden.’ Then I had all of September to just not do shit. I was like, ‘Oh, wait a minute. I’m still making

songs in my room and being bad at buying groceries.” 



 @imLeor

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.



Low SHELLY MOSMAN

its bleakly beautiful, devastatingly restrained songs into atoms, and now it's those atoms we hear, doing their buzzing, pulsing dance.

RAE AMITAY Member of *Immortal Bird* and *Thrawsunblat*

Rush, "Distant Early Warning" Rush is my favorite band of all time, to the point where I can even (somewhat) enjoy and (sort of) defend 1996's watered-down and critically panned *Test for Echo*. That said, "Distant Early Warning," from 1984's *Grace Under Pressure*, is pop-infused synth-rock with bits of Rush's trademark progressive feel

sprinkled throughout, but it's mostly just a great fucking song. Unpretentious, sincere, relatable lyrics ("I see the tip of the iceberg, and I worry about you") and a great arrangement make this a highly recommended jam.

PHILIP MONTORO
Reader music editor

Rio Mira at Martyrs', September 15 I went to this World Music Festival show to see Cuban big band Orquesta Akokán, and Colombian-Ecuadorian openers Rio Mira caught me by surprise. Their album had struck me as fussy and oversweetened, but onstage their battery of percussion and voices—skin drums, shakers, marimba, and four strong, charismatic singers—blossomed into a blood-stirring surge of rhythm and melody. I hoped they'd blow a fuse, so I could hear them unamplified—it would've felt like traveling back in time.

Sony MDR-7506 headphones Last month I broke the Sony cans I've owned for two decades by spilling my laptop off my desk and snapping their jack. Like the premature curmudgeon I am, I replaced them with a model made since 1991. I've worn these same over-ear headphones in half a dozen recording studios over the years—engineers like to use them as monitors, which ought to tell you how comfortable they are and how good they sound.

Low, *Double Negative* This venerable Minnesota slowcore trio, anchored by Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker, has been inching from rock instrumentation toward electronic textures for a couple albums now. The new *Double Negative* abandons that gradualism for a breathtaking leap. Almost every sound—sometimes even Sparhawk and Parker's lovely vocal harmonies—is processed, distorted, or degraded. It's as though Low has blasted



Meshell Ndegeocello CHARLIE GROSS

IN ROTATION

Everyone being stoked about Judas Priest It seems like the love for Halford & Co. has been seriously reinvigorated with the release of March's *Firepower*, and while pseudo-nostalgia usually bums me out, I have zero issue with twentysomethings going all-out to recapture the aesthetic and enthusiasm of the Judas Priest fans tailgating in the 1986 documentary *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*. I caught Priest in Bloomington earlier this year—they played "Painkiller" a little slow and "Breaking the Law" a little fast, and it was entirely perfect.

Meshell Ndegeocello, *Ventriloquism* In April, Ndegeocello released this album of R&B covers from the 80s and 90s, making them her own through delicate yet powerful reinterpretation and rearrangement. She adds a great deal of depth and nuance to songs that might've otherwise been doomed to formulaic digestibility (one of many great examples is her take on TLC's "Waterfalls"). Additionally, proceeds from the album benefit the ACLU.



The cover of *One Hundred Mornings* by Windows96

M.K.
Guitarist and vocalist in Fin

Schrat, *Alptrraumgänger* (2018) This nightmarish black metal from Germany hews to the traditional style most are accustomed to. The combination of speed and agility in the riffs packs quite an allure.

Catacombes, *Accueille le Diable* EP (2018) Quebecois one-man project Catacombes makes traditional black metal that tells a story through tasteful compositions and nostalgic riffing.

Windows96, *One Hundred Mornings* (2018) This is absolutely nonsensical vaporwave garbage that you can really shut your brain off to. I simply can't get enough of it.

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COURTESY THE ARTIST

PICK OF THE WEEK

After four decades, Australian postpunks the Scientists make their first U.S. tour

IN THE MID-70S, guitarist and vocalist Kim Salmon dreamed of playing punk music in his hometown of Perth, the isolated capital city of western Australia. Though he initially had nothing to work from except a six-week-old issue of *NME* and a Ramones record, by the summer of 1978 he'd spent time in one of Perth's few early punk bands, the Cheap Nasties, before joining up with local group the Exterminators, which morphed into a new group he christened the Scientists. The band cut their teeth making the sort of blunt, hooky garage rock that fills their 1981 self-titled debut, but after Salmon discovered the Cramps in the early 80s, the Scientists went through a transformation that would cement their classic lineup—Salmon, bassist Boris Sujdovic, drummer Brett Rixon, and guitarist Tony Thewlis—and define their sound. The bandmates soon relocated to Sydney and introduced an evocative, feral “swamp rock” strain of punk, best captured on the sun-baked, swashbuckling 1982 B side “Swampland,” and on a couple of seven-inches and a mini LP they dropped on Australian indie Au Go Go. In 1984, the Scientists moved to London, where they landed big gigs and tours with the Gun Club, Siouxsie & the Banshees, and the Sisters

of Mercy. Despite this success, prolonged legal issues with Au Go Go kept the band impoverished, and eventually the group started ripping apart. Rixon (who died of a heroin overdose in 1993) left in early '85 and was replaced by Leanne Cowie (nee Chock) by the end of that year, and in 1986 Sujdovic left the UK and the band due to visa issues. The Scientists officially called it quits in 1987, after Salmon, Thewlis, and another new drummer (Nick Combe) recorded the noisy album *The Human Jukebox*. The band played a handful of reunion shows in the 90s and 00s, including their only U.S. appearance to date at the 2010 All Tomorrow's Parties festival in upstate New York. In 2016, Numero Group dropped a massive Scientists box set, *A Place Called Bad* (with liner notes by *Reader* contributor Erin Osmon), and earlier this year Salmon, Sujdovic, Thewlis, and Cowie announced their first U.S. tour. The band also returned to the studio to record new material for California garage indie label In the Red. The A side to their July single, “Braindead (Resuscitated),” is a cleaner, tighter version of a *Human Jukebox* track, and the heat-wave eeriness of “Survival-skills” on the B side shows the Scientists still have chemistry. —LEOR GALIL

THURSDAY4

CHARALAMBIDES *Plastic Crimewave Syndicate* headlines; *Charalambides* and *Matchess* open. 9 PM, the Owl, 2521 N. Milwaukee. 21+ **FREE**

Charalambides: Tom and Christina Carter (Drawing Room) is the first album of new music in seven years by the Texas-based duo, and, like its title suggests, one of their most elemental. The Carters first played music under that name in 1991, and since then they've covered a lot of musical territory, including densely arranged psychedelic epics, straightforward folk songs, freely improvised feedback duels, and austere, wordless chorales.

The new album, like its predecessor, *Exile* (Kranky), is a double LP, but the two releases couldn't be more different. *Exile* is an extended meditation on loss with varied, carefully executed arrangements recorded in three states over half a decade. The six pieces on the latest record were recorded live in the studio over two nights—and there's barely a word on any of them. Each track begins with Tom articulating blues-tinged progressions or looped atmospherics on electric guitar, the foundation over which he patiently unwinds spare, eerie leads or Christina moans, coos, and keens intricate figures. The absence of lyrics opens the music up to express emotions that are deeply felt but impossible to name. —BILL MEYER

DEVOTCHKA *Orkesta Mendoza* opens. 7:30 PM, the Vic, 3145 N. Sheffield, \$28.50. 18+

Seven years after releasing their sixth studio album, 2011's *100 Lovers* (Anti-), folksy Gypsy rockers Devotchka have returned with their most orchestrated and gorgeous full-length yet, *This Night Falls Forever* (Concord). Devotchka always have made dense, multifaceted music, but on this record, singer and multi-instrumentalist Nick Urata's film-scoring influence is most evident (not that fellow multi-instrumentalists Tom Hagerman and Jeanie Schroder make any less impact than usual). An accomplished film and television composer with 30 credits under his belt, Urata has a penchant for the cinematic, and on *This Night Falls*

Forever, he joins epic arrangements with tales of heartbreak, longing, and devotion. “Love Letters” is especially heart-wrenching, with Urata ruminating about lost love over pizzicato strings and garage-rock guitars: “I guess all is forgotten and nothing's forgiven / I know what you're holding, and I know where it's hidden / It's somewhere back in your memory / There's a younger, prettier version of me.” On top of the usual indie-rock instrumentation, *This Night Falls Forever* bursts with strings, woodwinds, piano, acoustic bass, classical guitar, theremin, percussion, and more, which complements Urata's troubadour voice to a T. And though the Devotchka live experience can't possibly reproduce all of the album's layered beauty, it's still one not to miss. —SCOTT MORROW



Devotchka © MANMADE MEDIA

SOCCER MOMMY *Sasami* opens. 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, sold out.

Under the name Soccer Mommy, 20-year-old Sophie Allison creates the type of mellow rock songs that can break your heart and then make you feel like you're getting a giant, warm hug in the shift between a verse and a chorus. It's the type of brilliant songwriting maneuver that might come as a surprise from someone who's on record in the Fader saying that Avril Lavigne's *Under My Skin* (2004) was the first album to change her life. On



Charalambides © STEPHAN LAACKMAN

Allison's first proper full-length, this year's *Clean* (Fat Possum), she pairs hyperpersonal lyricism with a huge dose of 90s alt-rock (an obvious comparison would be her former tourmate, Liz Phair). The whole thing is beautiful, stirring, and emotionally moving—clearly the work of someone wise and talented beyond her years. I recently cooked a giant pot of homemade tomato soup while listening to *Clean*, and I can't state enough how perfect of a complement it was to enjoy with something so warm and comforting. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

TRÄD, GRÄS OCH STENAR *Endless Boogie* opens. 9 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$20. 21+

During the artistic ascent of rock music during the 1960s, strains of psychedelia developed at an astonishing rate, with each individual scene advancing some unique take on the music. Sweden's Träd, Gräs och Stenar only released music for a few short years during the early 70s, but they're considered by some to have outstripped state-side psych acts in improvisatory daring on live recordings such as *Djungeln's Lag* and *Mors Mors*. The band's lineage stretches back through several noteworthy bands of the era: the caveman thudding of Pärson Sound gave way to the tripped-out noodling of International Harvester (later shortened to Harvester), hedging a bit closer to an Acid Test vibe before Träd, Gräs och Stenar brought it all together in a full embrace of bucolic hippie idealism. These days guitarist Jakob Sjöholm is the lone connection to the group's early period (he's now joined by Dungen's Reine Fiske, among others), but the self-titled album they released on Subliminal Sounds this August under the name Träden still merges brightly hued guitar workouts with folksier psych traditions, replete with occasional fiddle accompaniment. "The reason that our band still attracts people today is maybe because the music is, in a sense, timeless, just like you want your life to be," Sjöholm recently wrote me in an e-mail. On ➔

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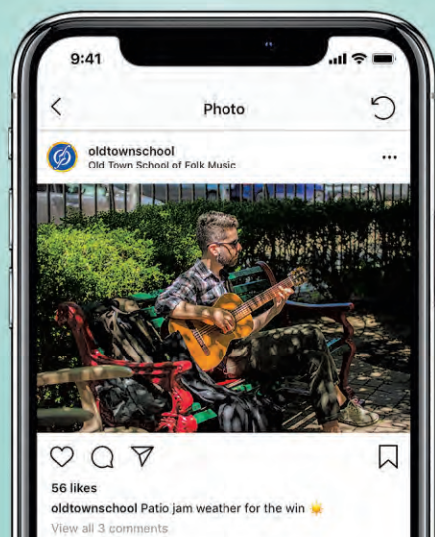
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MUSIC



Hiroko Yamamura COURTESY THE ARTIST

set by minimal techno titan Richie Hawtin and an opening set from veteran Chicago techno producer and DJ Hiroko Yamamura. She's as embedded in the local dance scene as anyone can be—she routinely spins at hot spots such as Spybar, Sound Bar, and Smart Bar, and she's also in with foundational house label Trax (which recently issued a digital compilation, *That's What I Call Trax! Volume 1*, that features her 2016 single "Moon Rocks"). The material she's released this year includes a couple collaborations with Angel Alanis ("Jacare" for *Chuck Daniels Presents: Sampled Sixteen V. 1* and a remix of Lauren Flax and DJ Heather's "The Acid") as well as a set for Smart Bar resident Jeff Derringer's *Oktave Records* podcast. Throughout it all, Yamamura cuts bubbling synths with percussion that shocks like static electricity—these dark streaks color her music and give it an adrenalized boost. —LEOR GALIL

FRIDAY5

THE BETHS *Mother Evergreen and Special Death* open. 8 PM, *Beat Kitchen*, 2100 W. Belmont, \$10. 17+

continued from 31

their postreunion recordings (including that Träden album), the band summon transcendent guitar screeds with less fervor than in the past. But when it strikes them, they're still capable of calling forth the freedom-seeking serenity that recalls a time that in a lot of ways was just as troubled as 2018 but still filled with hope and exaltation. —DAVE CANTOR

HIROKO YAMAMURA *Kobe Dupree and Zooley Glass* open. 10 PM, *Smart Bar*, 3730 N. Clark. 21+ **FREE**

The organizers behind Mamby on the Beach understand electronic music: its history, how it intersects with a panoply of other genres, and its future. The Sunday lineup for the dance-music tent at the annual festival this June included a headlining

It may come as a surprise to find out that all of the members of Auckland four-piece the Beths are university-trained jazz musicians; their catchy, direct indie pop seems as far from jazz as Western music could get. But listening to vocalist and guitarist Elizabeth Stokes discuss the influence of jazz standards in a recent interview with *Substream Magazine* makes the line between their education and their recorded output more clear. "I like how succinct [jazz standards] are at putting out an idea or a concept or a theme," she explains. "You never finish a song like, 'What was that song about?'" That sentiment comes through on the Beths' debut album, *Future Me Hates Me*, especially on highlight "River Run: Lvl 1," when Stokes paints a visceral portrait of anxiety as a river that carries her "out of view" from friends and family. "I'm filling up with vapor / But when the cold sinks in a lit-

Soccer Mommy

NATALIA MANTINI





The Beths MASON FAIREY

tle later / A river will run," she sings while guitars hammer away with the motion and intensity of a waterfall. That feeling of resignation runs through the album, but the quartet counterweights the heaviness with stunningly bright guitar riffs and charmingly exuberant vocal harmonies—it's a delicate line to walk, but the Beths make it seem easy. The band made their first Chicago appearance at the Empty Bottle earlier this year, and as *Future Me* has made them critical darlings (they've already been featured by *Rolling Stone*, NPR, and Pitchfork, among other outlets), tonight's show might be your last chance to catch them in town in such an intimate setting. —ED BLAIR

CARDINALS FOLLY *Hollow Leg, Witchkiss, and Uncouth open. 8 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, 2105 S. State, \$12. 21+*

This murky, heavy, hairy Finnish trio are a known quantity on every outing, and on their fourth full-length, *Deranged Pagan Sons* (released last year on Nine), they continue with their reliable formula of weaving the heavy, groovy riffage of a Sabbath and Pentagram pedigree through a distinct homeland

sensibility pioneered by their forebears, Reverend Bizarre. Cardinals Folly build steady and reliable structures from a familiar toolbox: clean vocals (with growl eruptions), tempo shifts, and an aesthetic rooted in sword-and-sorcery and pulp-fiction paganism. "Worship Her Fire" gets things off to a rollicking start, but the album jells best in its final two tracks, the brooding "I Belong in the Woods" and the eight-and-a-half-minute "Secret of the Runes," which hints at something more expansive and adventurous yet to come. A split with Lucifer's Fall is the next project on the horizon for Cardinals Folly, so watch out for some new tracks. —MONICA KENDRICK

SATURDAY 6

DERKÉTA *Blood Feast, Embalmer, Malas, Tartarus, Centenary, and Molder open. 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 235 N. Ashland, \$18. 17+*

Almost 40 years since extreme metal emerged out of the pits of hell (or at least its garages and basements), the gender of its practitioners remains overwhelmingly male. But even in its earliest ➔



Derkéta
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with Antonio Sanchez,
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MUSIC

Wizard Apprentice

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continued from 33

days, women wanted in on the fun. In the late 80s, vocalist and guitarist Sharon Bascovsky asked her friend Terri Heggen to start a death-metal band—Heggen even learned drums to do it. Taking the name Derkéta from a goddess of death in the Conan the Barbarian mythos, the Pittsburgh duo began writing songs that merge raw, scathing death metal with guttural, churning doom—and by their own account, they were the first all-woman band in either genre. Derkéta released a demo titled *An Unholy Ground* in 1990; later that year they rerecorded two of its tracks and released them as the EP *Premature Burial*. Mary Bielich joined in on bass occasionally throughout 1991, but the band split later that year before ever solidifying a full lineup. Bascovsky held on to the band name, though, and Derkéta released a split seven-inch with Nunslaughter in 1999, then appeared on a compilation a couple years later. Over the years she'd also written songs the band had never recorded, and in 2006 she found something to do with that material: she re-formed Derkéta with Heggen on drums, Bielich on guitar, and Robin Mazen on bass, and the four-piece recorded their debut full-length, 2012's *In Death We Meet*. (Heggen soon left due to other commitments, and former Cattle Decapitation drummer Michael Laughlin stepped in.) The cavernous, punishing songs pulse with the energy of a band that's never skipped a beat—you'd never guess this was a reunion record. Bascovsky's throaty death growl, which is so deep that she's been accused of using effects pedals, is a particular highlight. If you love darkness, Derkéta will make your skin crawl in the most delightful of ways. —JAMIE LUDWIG

WIZARD APPRENTICE *Julius Smack and Sasha No Disco* open. *Midnight, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$5. 21+*

What we think of as “folk music” is generally played on traditional acoustic instruments, but as

technology weaves itself ever more inextricably into human lives, electronics have become as much “of the people” as fiddles or nylon-string guitars—maybe even more so. Producer, performer, and multimedia artist Tieraney Carter (who runs the video blog *URL GURL*) calls herself a “digital folk artist,” and the eclectic music she creates as Wizard Apprentice uses lo-fi electronics, looping pedals, and clean, melodic vocals. Her atmospheric tunes are intimate and accessible, not just in their content but in the means of their creation: she writes introspective, relatable lyrics and prefers user-friendly technologies that practically anyone could pick up. On her recent EP *I Am Invisible*, Carter ponders the freedoms that come with going unnoticed, the complexities of accountability and forgiveness in a romantic relationship, and the daydreams we indulge in about future lives with our crushes before we even know how they feel about us. Anyone who's ever gotten lost in her thoughts is susceptible to Wizard Apprentice's idiosyncratic charm. —JAMIE LUDWIG

SUNDAY7

SCIENTISTS See *Pick of the Week*, page 30. *Des Demonas and Axis:Sova* open. 9 PM, East Room, 2354 N. Milwaukee, \$25. 21+

MONDAY8

TOM MORELLO 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, sold out. 18+

Revolutionary virtuosic guitarist and Libertyville native Tom Morello has tried on a lot of hats since the 2000 dissolution of his pioneering hyperpolitical funk-metal band Rage Against the Machine: there's been the supergroup Audioslave (fronted by Soundgarden vocalist Chris Cornell);



Tom Morello © AMY HARRIS

his protest folk project the Nightwatchman; his stint as a Bruce Springsteen sideman; his collaboration with Boots Riley of the Coup under the name Street Sweeper Social Club; and most recently Prophets of Rage, a Rage Against the Machine quasi reunion that includes members of Public Enemy and Cypress Hill. Though some of these projects have been extremely successful on a mainstream level (Audioslave has sold over five million records to date), I've found that most of them have left something to be desired, and after listening to them I've just wanted more Rage. On his upcoming solo debut, *The Atlas Underground* (out October 12 on Mom + Pop Music), it's appar-

ent that Morello is trying his damndest to channel the high-energy collision of metal and hip-hop he made his name with, but unfortunately this time around it's a swing and a miss. *Atlas Underground* has a bevy of guests vocalists including Gza, Rza, Killer Mike, Big Boi, and Chicago rapper Vic Mensa. There's a ton of heart and promise brought to the table, but at the end of the day, Morello's funky guitar playing over superslick, overproduced hip-hop and EDM beats is more confounding than effective. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

WEDNESDAY10

SOB X RBE *Quando Rondo* opens. 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake, \$20. 17+

By the end of the year SOB X RBE, the great rap hope of Vallejo, California, will have dropped their first two studio albums, February's *Gangin* and its new sequel, *Gangin II* (both out on SOB X RBE/Empire). Also by the end of the year: the group may be no more, or at the very least, they'll no longer be a foursome. On Wednesday, September 19, rapper Yhung T.O. announced he'd be done with SOB X RBE after *Gangin II* via a now-deleted Instagram post. Some online rumors suggest the group will disband, but it's hard to consider SOB X RBE without T.O.'s soulful melodies, which are as crucial to their identity as Slimmy B's impatient flow, DaBoii's serrated bars, and Lul G's uppercut rhymes. On *Gangin*, they mix pop-forward hooks with the kind of jittery hyphy-influenced rap that made them heroes in Vallejo—a party-rap collage that made their contribution to the *Black Panther* soundtrack ("Paramedic!") hold ground amid tracks from Vince Staples, the Weeknd, and TDE's entire roster. "Made It," a sun-soaked, upbeat single from *Gangin II*, feels slightly melancholic given SOB X RBE's current state. And if the rumors are true, this could be the last time SOB X RBE play Chicago, or at least in its current form. —LEOR GALIL



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 11/18 PALAYE ROYALE
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 11/30 REVEREND HORTON HEAT
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FRIDAY OCT 5
 We Still Believe with
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 (ALL NIGHT)

SATURDAY OCT 6
 Oktave 9 Year with
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SUNDAY OCT 7
 Queen! with
 K ALEXI / MICHAEL SERAFINI
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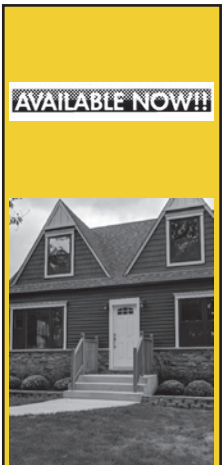
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Lesbian bed death? Try mindfulness

Dan enlists psychologist and author Lori Brotto for advice applicable to all.

Q: Is it even possible for a couple that stopped having sex to start back up again? My girlfriend and I (we're both women) have been together for four years, and we haven't had sex for two. I thought the sex was good before it stopped, but apparently she was going through the motions. She's a sex worker, and it took her a while to figure out she was not being present, and she wanted to stop having sex with me until she could figure out how to change that. I get that and respect it. We have an open relationship, so I started having more sex with other people. And while it's fun, I do find myself wishing I could have sex with someone I actually care about—and I only care about her. She says she wants to start having sex with me again, but we don't really know how to do that. Everything is kind of terrifying and awkward. We're very romantic with each other, and there are other forms of physical affection like kisses and snuggling, but no making out or humping. I love her more than I knew I could love a person, and if we never do figure out how to have sex together, I'll still stay with her. But for two people who are both highly sexual and want to have sex with each other, we sure are perplexed at how to make this work. —SEX OR ROMANCE DILEMMA

A: "Let's cut to the chase: Yes, it's possible for a couple that has stopped having sex to start having it again," said Lori Brotto, a clinical psychologist and sex researcher at the University of British Columbia.

Brotto sees two good reasons for hope in your case: You and your girlfriend are completely open and honest with each other, and you're committed to staying together whether or not the sex resumes. Your communication skills and that rock-solid commitment are the bedrock on which you can rebuild your sex life.

"There are two aspects of SORD's question that jump out at me: One, the reference to wanting to be present for sex, and two, the description of the situation as terrifying and awkward," said Brotto. "SORD's girlfriend likely perfected the practice of 'going elsewhere' during sex while at work, which meant that it became almost automatic for her to do this while having sex in her relationship. This is classic mindlessness, and it is why mindfulness—the state of full awareness to the present moment in a kind and compassionate way—may be a tool for her to consider implementing."

Mindfulness is the subject of Brotto's new

book, *Better Sex Through Mindfulness: How Women Can Cultivate Desire*.

"Mindfulness has a long history in Buddhist meditation," said Dr. Brotto. And "there's an impressive body of research that supports the practice of mindful sex."

So how does this ancient mindfulness stuff work where modern girl-on-girl sex is concerned?

"The practice is simple," said Brotto. "It involves deliberately paying attention to sensations, sounds, and thoughts in the present moment—and noticing when the mind gets pulled elsewhere and then gently but firmly guiding it back. Mindfulness is also about not berating yourself for finding it challenging or judging yourself for the thoughts you have."

And if you're nervous or scared that it won't work or that you'll never reconnect sexually with your girlfriend, SORD, mindfulness can help there too.

"The uncertainty surrounding what will happen when they try to reintegrate sex can be terrifying for some couples," said Brotto. "The good news is that mindfulness can help with the tendency to get lost on the thought train."

So here's what you're going to do, per Brotto's instructions for trying a mindful touching exercise called "sensate focus":

"She will invite her girlfriend to touch her from head to toe, minus the genitals, for 15 minutes—without the goal of triggering arousal or desire," said Brotto. "SORD's role is to pay attention to the sensations emerging, and curtail any thoughts by redirecting attention

to the here and now. And relax. After 15 minutes, they switch roles so SORD becomes the giver and her girlfriend is the receiver. This is not foreplay. It is not manual sexual stimulation. It is a mindfulness exercise designed to teach a person to remain in the present while receiving sensual touch."

There are solo mindfulness exercises, SORD, and some good, commercially available apps out there that can walk you through them. But if your goal is reconnecting with

your girlfriend, Brotto strongly recommends that you two work on mindfulness together.

"My view is that a couple-based mindfulness exercise like sensate focus will get them to their goal of mind-blowing, mind-knowing sex," said Brotto. **✉**

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WOLF BY KEITH HERZIK

GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

FOR MOST HESHERS, releasing a 12-inch solo EP and scorching splits with satanic Ohio squad Midnight and legendary Sabat front man Gezol in one year would count as productive. But **Chris Black** has already done all that, and his 2018 is just getting started. He has one of metal's most diverse discographies—the Reader has covered his groups **High Spirits**, **Superchrist**, and **Dawnbringer** for years and only scratched the surface. On Friday, October 5, he'll outdo himself by dropping three full-lengths—which he describes as “distinct and separate in terms of the music, lyrics, and atmosphere”—under the name **Professor Black**. The instrumental **Lvps** features Circle leader Jussi Lehtisalo and former Agalloch bassist Jason Walton on four swirling, long-form jams; **Sunrise**, performed entirely by Black, recalls Dawnbringer's most yearning, melodic riff quests; **I Am the Rock**, recorded with local guitarist Mark Sugar, is stuffed with hard-charging, Motörhead-esque bangers.

On Thursday, September 27, Chicago hardcore heavies **Harm's Way** played Las Vegas before meeting LA band **Terror** for an 18-date tour. In Vegas their trailer was stolen, and with it their merch, instruments, and amps. In their public statement about the theft, the band stoically declined financial help, but on Friday, September 28, their friend Colin Young (front man of **Twitching Tongues**) set up a **GoFundMe** for Harm's Way. By Sunday afternoon it had raised most of its \$25,000 goal. They haven't missed a gig, and their tour stops at **Subterranean** on Wednesday, October 10.

Former **Rabble Rabble** members **Ralph Darski** and **Andrew Kettering** have cooked up a bonkers cosmic psych-pop band called **Twila Bent** with **Jered Gummere** (Ponys, Bare Mutants) and **Phil Karnats** (Secret Machines, Tripping Daisy). On Monday, October 8, at the **Empty Bottle**, they play their first gig, a free show that's also a release party for **LWAS**, their first album. —**J.R. NELSON** AND **LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

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A Place to Bury Strangers 10/19, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Red City Radio 10/14, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge
Restorations 10/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Saints of Valory 11/2, 9 PM, Schubas
Saintseneca 10/12, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Satan, Damien Thorne 10/11, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Saves the Day, An Horse 11/2, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Soft Moon 1/24, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
This Will Destroy You 11/2, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Kurt Vile & the Violators 12/22, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Watsky 10/24, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall
Bob Weir & the Wolf Bros 10/31-11/1, 7 PM, Chicago Theatre
Pete Yorn 10/23, 7:30 PM, Park West, 18+
Yung Pinch 11/14, 6:30 PM, Patio Theater
Yungblud 10/18, 7 PM, Subterranean

SOLD OUT

Bully 10/18, 9 PM, Hideout
Cavetown 12/8, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge
Billie Eilish 10/28, 7 PM, Metro
Every Time I Die, Turnstile 11/12, 6 PM, Metro
Laura Jane Grace & the Devouring Mothers 11/8, 8 PM, Hideout
Conan Gray 11/13, 7 PM, Schubas
Greta Van Fleet 12/12, 7 PM and 12/14-15, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom
Jim James, Alynda Segarra 11/9, 7:30 PM, the Vic
Max, Bryce Vine 10/31, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge
Mitski, Jessica Lee Mayfield 10/25, 7:30 PM, the Vic
Tenacious D 11/13-14, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Kali Uchis 10/24, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre
Lucinda Williams 11/17, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry Benefit
Years & Years 10/15, 7:30 PM, the Vic
Thom Yorke 12/4, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre

El Ten Eleven 11/10, 9 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Electric Six 10/18, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Elephante 10/20, 8:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Roky Erickson 11/9, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall
Exploded View 11/1, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Felly, Gypps 12/1, 6:30 PM, Patio Theater
Future Generations 10/18, 9 PM, Beat Kitchen
Get Up Kids, Remember Sports 11/10, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Goo Goo Dolls 10/26, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Grapetooth 11/11, 7 PM, Thalia Hall
Ha Ha Tonka 11/15, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Hand Habits 10/21, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Har Mar Superstar & Sabrina Ellis 11/24, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Nikki Hill 11/3, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Interpol 2/7, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre
Junglepussy 10/13, 8 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Kimbra 12/5, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
King's X 12/9, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Lake Street Dive 10/27, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Lany 11/1, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre
Lemon Twigs 1/25, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Los Lobos 12/9-12, 8 PM, City Winery
Low 11/16, 7:30 PM, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel
J Mascis 11/20-21, 8 PM, City Winery
Maxwell 12/2, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Medasin 10/13, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Jim Messina 10/21, 8 PM, City Winery
Pat Metheny 10/12, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre
Misfits, Fear, Venom Inc. 4/27, 7:30 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont
Jessica Moss 12/12, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Nothing, Nowhere, Wicca Phase Springs Eternal 12/19, 6 PM, Bottom Lounge
Odonis Odonis 11/4, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Oh Sees, Timmy's Organism 10/12, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Owl City 10/13, 8 PM, House of Blues
Doug Paisley 11/29, 9 PM, Hideout
Pale Waves, Candescent 11/21, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge
Panic! At the Disco 2/4, 7 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont
Paper Kites 11/21, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

UPCOMING

Paula Abdul 10/27, 9 PM, Silver Creek Events Center, New Buffalo
Acid Dad 11/2, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
All Time Low 12/21, 7:30 PM, House of Blues
Lily Allen 10/31, 7:30 PM, the Vic
Randy Bachman 1/24-25, 8 PM, City Winery
Eric Bachmann 10/13, 9 PM, Hideout
Courtney Barnett, Waxahatchee 10/18, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Beak 10/15, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Behemoth, At the Gates, Wolves in the Throne Room 11/9, 7:30 PM, House of Blues, 17+
Brand X 12/8, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Bring Me the Horizon 2/5, 6 PM, Aragon Ballroom
Pieta Brown, David Huckfelt 11/8, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music
Cloud Nothings, Courtney 12/14, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Phil Collins 10/22, 8 PM, United Center
Elvis Costello & the Imposters 11/14, 8 PM, the Vic
David Crosby 11/19, 7:30 PM, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, Skokie
Cursive 11/15, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Destroyer 10/17, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Devildriver 11/11, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Dirty Projectors 11/11-13, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Dustbowl Revival, Lindi Ortega 11/4, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Kongos 1/23, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+
John Legend 12/13, 7 PM, Lyric Opera House, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM
Mandolin Orange 2/16, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 17+
John Maus 11/19, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Bobby McFerrin & Gimme5 2/22-23, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/4, noon
Andrew McMahon in the Wilderness, Flor 3/2, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+
Matt Nathanson 3/9, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM
Native Howl 1/27, 7 PM, Reggie's Music Joint
Plattenbau 12/21, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Queen Naija 11/14, 7 PM, Metro
Regrettes 11/30, 7 PM, Subterranean, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM
Russian Circles, Bongripper 11/23, 9 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+
Musiq Soulchild 1/3-4, 7:30 and 10 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/4, noon
John Splithoff, Josie Dunne 11/19, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+
Webb Wilder & the Beatnecks 12/29, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 10/5, 11 AM
Adrian Younge 12/16, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Gallant 11/3, 6:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, canceled

UPDATED



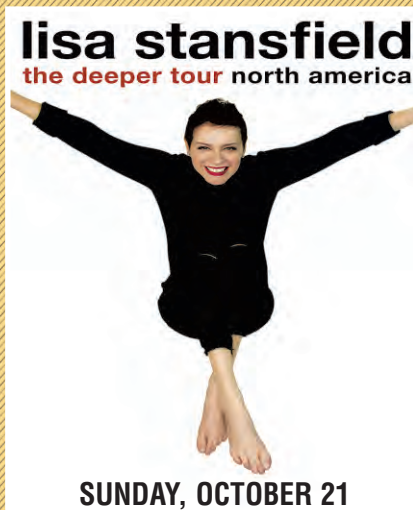
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NEW

Tab Benoit 12/17-18, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/4, noon
Big Head Todd & the Monsters 2/23, 8 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+
Brave Combo 12/15, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Ammie Brod 12/9, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Buxton 12/6, 9 PM, Hideout
Cat Power, Willis Earl Beal 12/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 17+
Sarah Davachi 11/17, 9 PM, Hideout
Dawes 1/29, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+
Conya Doss 11/12, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/4, noon
Drab Majesty 11/29, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Steve Earle 1/14-15 and 2/25-26, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/4, noon
Alejandro Escovedo with Don Antonio Band 1/31-2/2, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/4, noon
Every Avenue 12/28, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 10/5, 9 AM, 17+
Expo '76 & the Total Pro Horns 12/31, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 10/5, 11 AM
Facs 11/1, 9 PM, Hideout
Jon Dee Graham 12/1, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Herobust 1/19, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+
Tish Hinojosa 12/14, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 10/5, 11 AM
The Knocks 2/14, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 10/5, 10 AM, 18+

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